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An Address to the Public on the Propriety
of Midwives, instead of Surgeons,
practising midwifery

by

J. R. Pickmere

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ADDRESS TO THE PUBLIC

ON THE PROPRIETY OF

MIDWIVES, INSTEAD OF SURGEONS,
PRACTISING MIDWIFERY.

By J. R. PICKMERE.

"Nothing ought to be held laudable or becoming, but what nature itself should prompt us to think so."—STEELE. Spectator, Vol. 1. No. 6.

The Fourth Edition, intended for the PAMPHLETEER, with considerable additions.

IN presenting to the public a new edition of my tract, intitled as above, I will compress the preface, the address, and the postscript into one view; and will introduce some elementary discussions confirmatory of the subject, which, since the last edition was published, have occurred to me as being requisite; at the same time, adding a brief notice of some relative circumstances which have since transpired, and adapting the whole to the exigencies of the present period. I have, in this edition, expatiated on the nature of delicacy, as connected with midwifery and the marriage-state. In taking a philosophical view of delicacy thus related, and partly in some other respects, I have been passing through a region, which from the general novelty of the subject of this tract in print, has not, I believe, been before attempted to be fully explored. I may therefore by inadvertency have committed some errors in expression, or left some points incomplete; defects which my friends will oblige by notifying to me, and which I hope the readers' candor will prompt them to excuse.

In again declaring my sentiments publicly, I am aware that I am still contending against a phalanx of men, who are united by their profession, in one common feeling and interest, to support the present accustomed practice of midwifery; nevertheless, I am emboldened by a consciousness that my efforts are founded on

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a due sense of religion, virtue, and decency; and it affords me pleasure to find, that since I first commenced an open attack, able coadjutors have renewed it with increased vigor. Let it be understood, however, that my censures are general: for I am informed that many respectable and disinterested members of the profession are disposed for a change; and I do not intend to question the great worth and usefulness of medical men, when they apply themselves with skill and integrity to an attentive discharge of the duties properly belonging to their vocation.

It is an incontrovertible axiom, that a mere custom, however ancient and prevalent, which is not founded on natural necessity, and which is intrinsically bad in its principle and effects as respects society, ought to be suppressed by all prudent and justifiable means. Such a custom is man-midwifery, when contrasted with the practice of midwives, as I shall plainly show. It will be readily admitted by all well-disposed persons, that, naturally, the fair sex have a greater sensibility to modesty, and especially as respects personal delicacy, than the other; that their natural modesty possesses, in the estimation of both sexes, an ideal excellence, the preservation of which materially contributes to the innocent enjoyments allotted to our temporal state by Providence, and that the moral purity of women forms a part of their religious obligations. Modesty, in its most extensive sense, is peculiarly graceful in the fair sex: their eternal welfare, and even their worldly reputation, are not the only points in which its preservation concerns them. Besides its ideal excellence, it imparts a winning and uniform decency to general behavior. There is, generally, that habitual loveliness in the aspect and manner of a lady of genuine modesty, contracted from the sympathy of the mind with the exterior person, which confers an additional grace on virtue and mental accomplishments, and adds an indispensable lustre to beauty and every personal attraction. Being enjoined in the exercise of our social duties to be active in doing good, besides refraining from the commission of unjustifiable harm, I am solely urged in this Address, by a sincere wish to defend some of the most amiable properties and shining ornaments of the sex from the plausible attacks of the ensnarer, to expose and deter the gross abuses and various great evils irremediably incidental to a continuance of the present system of midwifery, and to recommend, in their stead, innocent and effectual means of alleviating one of the many distresses to which human life is subject, in our present fleeting and probationary state of existence. Childbirth, like the parturition of females in every kind of viviparous animals, is purely a natural process, equally as remote from an artificial operation as the pulsation of the heart. In



ninety-nine cases out of a hundred, the labors of women are perfectly regular; and were they in such situations left each to herself, quite alone, without indelicate intrusion, or other accident, to protract or disorder the process, nature would nearly always successfully accomplish its own purposes. Numerous have been the instances eventually discovered in our country, in modern times, of poor females having been intentionally alone during labor, for the purpose of concealing the birth of illegitimate children. Civilisation has the general effect of strengthening the bodily powers in some classes of individuals, by means of constant hard exercise, and an ample supply of wholesome provisions; and, on the other hand, by producing the poor manufacturing and the inactive classes, it has the effect of weakening these powers: but, whether the bodily powers be strong or comparatively weak, so long as there is no disease, nor extreme debility, peculiarly affecting the organisation of nature, with reference to the involuntary corporeal actions in childbirth, the organisation is perfect; and the respective forces of the various actions are so modified and tempered together, as to suit the natural strength and occasion of the individual. Such particular disease, or extreme debility, is not more prevalent in civilised, than rude nations; therefore civilisation has not the effect of altering the nature of women, in respect of childbirth. In a state of rude nature, as well as in that of civilisation, mankind are social beings, mutually assisting each other; and therefore, in both these states, it is natural and proper that women should be attended, with a view to assistance or convenience, during childbirth. In a state of civilisation, such attention is not more essentially necessary, but it is more expected, on account of the refinements consequently introduced into habits and manners. Even, if civilisation had tended to create a necessity for more frequent essential assistance, and whether it does or not, the interests of society demand that those persons should be exclusively encouraged in the practice of midwifery, who are by nature adequate to administer this assistance most advantageously for mothers, and most congenially to the inclinations of husbands. I now, therefore, come to the immediate discussion of the present subject; to prove by comparison that women alone are the proper persons to render this assistance; and then to recommend the general adoption of midwives, and the consequent subversion of man-midwifery.

In our nation medical men rarely interfered in accouchements till within the last seventy or eighty years. The subsequent prevalence of man-midwifery never having become requisite, it must have had its origin in the lust and avarice of medical men of the

period when it commenced; by which they were prompted to exercise every insinuating art, and urge pretences of necessity for accomplishing their purposes, and establishing their practice. Doubtless they were accustomed then, as they now are, to be admitted into families on much freer terms than other male visitors. It is probable that they did not then, in general, act with the unblushing effrontery of their successors of the present age. Their practice in midwifery would generally be first introduced amongst young females only, on whose comparative artlessness and timidity they could most easily impose; and then a sense of delicacy having placed these completely and permanently under their restraint, as respects complaining of a breach of it to their husbands and the world, as I shall presently show, the next generation of females, by the arts of medical men, aided by the force of example, would more readily fall into their snares. In the mean time, the husband, as in the present day, being totally unacquainted with the business of midwifery, and hoping and fully expecting, in the ordinary course of events, that his wife's labor would be quite regular, and that the chance of a necessity for artificial aid was barely possible, confidently anticipated that the surgeon, though present, would not have occasion to offer more than a very slightly offensive assistance; and therefore made no objection to his attendance. The medical man well knew, by reflection on the properties of the human mind or by experience, that having once gained a point, delicacy would seal the mouth of the wife, and those of her female confidential attendants; and would even so far restrain them from complaining of the particular case, that in general they would not even do so to others of their own sex. He also well knew, that the husband, being entirely ignorant of the real character of the affair, or in case of unexpected or pretended difficulty, presuming on necessity, would manifest no objection. Thus the general practice of man-midwifery was established, and has been continued to the present time.

I am certain, that had husbands in general been aware of the nature and long continuance of the ordinary assistance personally given by the accoucheur, uniformly, in the later periods of even a perfectly natural and easy labor, the abominably gross indelicacy of it, as administered by a man, would have prevented the origin, or at least have speedily shortened the continuance of man-midwifery. Though this particular interference is exercised by every common midwife, as well as accoucheur, and has more relation to the temporary ease, than the safety of the mother; and though nature alone would operate effectually in nearly all instances, as it does throughout the whole viviparous creation, yet as it is of so simple a nature, that with a midwife it is quite harmless,

should it even be useless, I do not wish to be understood as censuring its adoption in proper hands.

Having taken a cursory view of the origin of man-midwifery, and of the primitive causes of its present continuance, the reader will not be surprised that the practice should be so very prevalent in this country as it now is, more especially if he advert to the present situation of affairs connected with it. The facility afforded to young men in late years of instruction in surgery and midwifery, the numerous anatomical lectures, and lectures on midwifery at the same time provided for their improvement, the great advances, both real and pretended, which have been lately made in the science of midwifery, the surprisingly increased number of surgeons, and even of physicians in the country who practise as such, have combined, as the immediate causes, almost wholly to extinguish the ancient and salutary practice of midwives, in consequence of their not having kept equal pace in improvement. It is well known that medical men, in general, have hitherto exerted all their influence to prevent women from acquiring a scientific knowledge of midwifery.

I will now proceed to point out the various great evils peculiar to the present system.

Besides the ordinary abuse arising out of man-midwifery, as before mentioned, licentious tricks of enormous depravity are sometimes committed, and others highly objectionable are very frequently practised by accoucheurs, in the course of their professional avocations. In entering on this part of the present subject, I will, with a view to prove the frequency of these extraordinary abuses, in the first place, quote the convincing arguments on this point, expressed in an excellent tract, published since the last edition of my pamphlet appeared, and which is intitled, "Observations on the impropriety of Men being employed in the business of Midwifery." The author's words are as follows:

"1st. Lust is the most powerful of all the appetites: to whatever extent it may be gratified, its demands are soon again renewed, especially if attracted by variety in its objects; and when the body has lost its power of indulgence, the mind frequently retains its desires, sometimes even heightened in a great degree. Therefore men advanced in years, when inclined by their vicious propensities, are empowered by their experience, and consequent subtleties, to contaminate the minds of women more than younger and less experienced men. Lust being thus the most powerful of all the appetites, it is, and it is necessary for natural purposes that it should be, less under the influence of the reason, than any other appetite; for if we had the power of coolly deliberating on the effects of indulgence, the intentions of nature would be

often frustrated. In consequence whereof this appetite is most subject to abuse.

“ 2nd. It is natural to man to abuse power and opportunity.”

“ 3rd. From the peculiar nature of their profession, accoucheurs have the greatest incitement to lust, and possess more ready means and pretences by which they may gratify it to a great extent, than any other class of men.

“ If these propositions be granted, and I think they cannot be denied, every thing is admitted that I wish to establish; namely, that great moral abuses are necessarily committed by medical men.”

I shall presently adduce various substantial reasons why the accoucheurs cannot be easily hindered, or seldom positively detected, in great abuses. One general conclusion, to be drawn from this observation and the arguments I have just cited, is, that, even without reference to various other objections to man-midwifery, and the abuse arising out of the ordinary practice of the accoucheur, no man, of whatever age, constitution, character, or station, can be reasonably depended on to act safely and correctly as an assistant at childbirth under any circumstances.

But should any person be so inconvincible, as really to consider the author's reasoning inconclusive, I appeal to such disinterested part of the community, as is competent to decide, for the truth of the frequency and generality in practice of the following wanton abuse, which the necessity of understanding will at once justify an allusion to here. It is common with many accoucheurs, besides the usual attention, to interfere in an early stage of even a regular labor, and occasionally afterwards, for the pretended purposes of ascertaining the progress made, or what length of time the practitioner may give to the pursuit of other professional avocations before assistance will become requisite. This being a very common practice, and of itself a grossly indelicate abuse, is it not exceedingly probable, that the accoucheur who, acting under the impulse of lust, thus takes one step in crime, must in time become hardened in guilt; and, accustomed to witness corporal agony with indifference, may be urged by a shocking depravity and the impetuosity of this passion to commence a dangerous surgical operation, under a pretence of its necessity, trusting that the real character of such an affair will not be discovered?

For an account of numerous general and particular instances of atrocious abuses, proceeding from lustful appetite, as committed by accoucheurs, I refer the reader to the respectable tract from which I have before quoted. The instances, to which I more especially allude, are the following: the abuses in the practice of the London hospitals, where the young medical man commonly finishes his studies; abuses in private practice, as unavailing personal ex-

aminations by the accoucheur, when consulted during pregnancy, under pretence of ascertaining the position of the child ; or if the female complain of pains in the abdomen, which are not uncommon during pregnancy, suggesting the possibility of an inflammation of the womb, and requiring a visual examination ; in the case of an unfortunate single woman, requiring such examination, when consulted to ascertain whether she were with child ; a particular instance of very gross licentiousness towards a young married lady, in a case of miscarriage, committed by one of the most celebrated professors in London ; and a case, which, though not exactly in point, is a collateral proof of the existence of these abuses, an infamous, but happily frustrated, scheme formed by a surgeon, to wantonly resort to a highly indelicate surgical process in a certain female disorder, when the use of medicine alone was subsequently deemed by another surgeon, his partner, amply sufficient, as the case proved, to give effectual relief.

I will give in the author's words a description of the general practices of the celebrated London professor, whom I have just mentioned, and accompany it with an extract from another part of the author's tract. "It appears that he does not indiscriminately attend ladies who apply to him ; but when his attendance is required, he calls on the party. If her person be attractive, he agrees to attend her ; if otherwise, he excuses himself on the plea of ill-health, or having already too much business ; professing his call to be one of politeness merely. To prove motives is impossible, but this is certain. He has offers of so much more business than he would be able to attend to, that he has the power of making a choice without sacrificing his self-interest ; and he does reject some ladies, although of superior station, in the manner and on the pleas ascribed to him. Also in the case of the young lady I have mentioned, he proved himself to be a gentleman not unlikely to adopt such a system. Besides, the extent to which the refinements of vice are carried by many persons, every body is acquainted with.

"It often happens that when those men who practise midwifery have acquired celebrity in their profession, and have therefore no longer occasion to win their way by gentleness and courting (and this generally happens at that period of life when gentleness and courting would avail them little), they commonly assume, grounded on their great experience and profound wisdom, a grave and decided air ; demanding openly and boldly any kind of examination their virtuous propensities may prompt them to require. The husband, if he be apprised of the doctor's dictum, is compelled to concede, from the supposed necessity and urgency of the case : the wife, under the influence of fear, of course sub-

mits, and the doctor has his gratification; knowing little about the matter, if there be any thing the matter, and caring no more for the result; receives his fee and departs, laughing as he goes at the gullibility of mankind."

It has been observed, says the same author, first, "that women offer no attractions to men at the time of childbirth;" secondly, "that if the man have any enjoyment, it is of little importance, as the woman does not participate;" and thirdly, "that the nurse is a protector from excessive abuse to women in these situations." He also anticipates an objection by stating, fourthly, "that unless for his previous and subsequent remarks, it might be supposed that accoucheurs would be deterred by self-interest from the commission of professional crimes." The author has refuted this sophistry, and I refer the reader to his tract for his reasoning. These excuses or arguments in favor of man-midwifery are so absurd, that I will say only a few words in reply to them. And first, it is important to remark that they purpose to obviate one only of the evils of the present system of midwifery—that is lust. Women, on the occasions mentioned, certainly offer few or none of the attractions arising from mental accomplishments; but they do offer the attractions of the person; and if these are impaired in some degree by the absence of these accomplishments and the occasion, the defect is readily extinguished in the mind of the experienced and intrepid accoucheur. He obviates the defect by the allowance he can make for its being temporary, for its not being the consequence of disease, but of a regular course of nature, and by the strong sensations arising from his extraordinarily unrestrained possession and enjoyment of the person, heightened by the novelty, and perhaps the youthful modesty, of the particular object. In reply to the second argument, freely admitting that the woman has no enjoyment, it does not contend that the accoucheur is free from unlawful lust, and as he is not, here is one crime; and surely to be with alacrity the passive object of this lust, if such a case should happen, is to be an abettor of the crime. In reference to the third excuse; the nurse bears such an intimate relation to the accoucheur, that she is rather an approver than a protector; besides an experienced accoucheur is too hardened to suffer the least restraint in his professional business from the presence of women, who I shall presently show are of little avail for the purpose of either detection or exposure. As to the fourth argument; it is extremely difficult to expose or positively detect the accoucheur, in cases even of great extraordinary abuse, on account of his ready plea, and for other reasons noticed hereafter; besides experience proves that men frequently sacrifice their greatest temporal, as well as their eternal interests to their passions.

Another sort of abuse, the ambition or desire of fame, which impels some accoucheurs to commence dangerous surgical operations, where nature is sufficient to complete her own works, as verified by an eminent member of the medical profession to be frequently practised, shall be reserved for especial notice, when discussing the injurious consequences to bodily health, and danger to life, proceeding from the various abuses before mentioned.

Having adverted to the abuses arising out of the present system of midwifery, I now come to a consideration, first, of the irremediable difficulties, in all cases, opposed to their suppression, under that system; and, secondly, of the character of these abuses, and of the immediate effects and remoter consequences produced by them.

There being more or less interference of the accoucheur with the female in every childbirth which he attends, there must always be a proportionate degree of indelicacy committed and suffered; and the moral evil of unlawful lust, on his part, may be considered to be in general co-extensive. The ordinary interference in common cases being considered requisite, and greater interference being required in every other case, it is obvious, that no remedy, except the subversion of man-midwifery, is applicable to any case. I will now examine, whether there is any remedy, except that, for extraordinary directly wanton abuses. The propriety or impropriety of any interference must depend in every case on the symptoms indicated, or the result of inquiry at the time, as to whether or not they induce a reasonable supposition, that the labor is so far advanced as to render some, be it more or less, assistance of the practitioner necessary. That by any human device the conduct of medical men could be universally and permanently restricted to a proper course in this respect is absolutely impossible. Aware, in a general point of view, of the natural forwardness peculiar to the male sex, yet naturally strangers in feeling to the impetuosity and extent of desire which prompts it, women are easily deceived by supposed necessity, or the pretences of the accoucheur. I am aware that females, to whom my remarks may be well known by information, and by whom they may be kept in mind, are competent to detect those extraordinary abuses, which are obviously without a good plea; but can this knowlege be made universal amongst them, and if it could, will not time eventually efface such knowlege in future generations? But in cases where the fact is ascertained by females, the only corrective to the accoucheur's misconduct, unless surgeons were discouraged from practising midwifery, would be a disclosure of a nature highly repugnant to the feelings of delicacy in the individual female, especially if young, whose modesty and general propriety of behavior might

intitle her to credit. The husband, if he should chance to be acquainted with the real circumstances, is mutually actuated by a sense of delicacy, as to the particular instance, with his wife. Delicacy, however, consequentially prompts her studiously to prevent his obtaining a knowledge of the actual circumstances, occurring even in the ordinary practice of the accoucheur. This feeling does not directly restrain her from communicating to him, who is her husband; but she is naturally conscious that to inform him would not only be the immediate cause of hurting his feelings, but, for reasons which I shall mention when treating of personal abasement, would occasion a risk of diminishing his love for her. She therefore conceals the case; instead of candidly and magnanimously informing him of it, and then trusting the event of her situation to Providence: she adopts a temporary expedient, instead of taking a step which, if often repeated, would be calculated to abolish all such evils in future, both in respect of herself and her sex in general. Her secrecy, however, originates in the anxiety of her conjugal love, and is such as to shelter her from meriting more than a small degree of blame. Delicacy generally prevents the neutral female spectator from owning to the particular instance of abuse, and silences the spontaneous complaints by women of general instances: it has these effects, as well in respect of communicating to an indifferent person, as because the notoriety of such abuses would lead husbands to inquire into circumstances connected with their respective wives. A public disclosure of a particular instance of extraordinary abuse would therefore rarely, if ever, be made; and even if it were made, and however true, it would not circulate far—would be liable to partial contradiction, disbelief, discountenance, suppression, or misconstruction, and would generally make only a slight impression on persons unaffected by it. Moreover, medical men are generally furnished with a plea. Thus, besides the almost universally insurmountable and unblamable aversion to making a public disclosure, for the sake of correction and reformation, it would be impossible for it, when made, to produce a general and lasting sensation in the community. This natural incompetency, to a great extent, in women to detect extraordinary abuse on the occasions of childbirth; their peculiar aversion to disclose, and the impossibility of the disclosure becoming effectual, considered with reference to the natural forwardness peculiar to the male sex, argues strongly in favor of midwives, and against surgeons, practising midwifery.

In reference to the observations which next follow, it will be well to premise, that some of them are not meant to be applicable to those persons whose habits or dispositions render them in a great degree insensible to decency, nor to husbands whose

affections have been seared by gross licentiousness in their wives : nor can many of them be expected to apply with proper force to those men, as husbands, whose matrimonial unions have been merely political, nor where through inveterate domestic strife their conjugal affections have subsided.

Without reference to the obvious criminality of lust arising out of the practice of man-midwifery, and therefore supposing it to be possible, that in any case the accoucheur should have interfered without having been excited by this passion, still it would unquestionably be indelicate for him to assist, as it is to be even simply present, at a childbirth ; and more especially as many in the profession, for motives which are obvious after what I have before stated, are averse to the presence of the husband on such occasions. Surely, as far as delicacy is concerned, the presence of the husband, when a surgeon is attending on such an occasion, is, or at least may be, a restraint on extraordinary abuse, or affords better means of detecting it ; and according to the free and unprejudiced feelings of our nature, when the occasion is in anticipation, and the husband's reasonable suspicions are aroused, is more congenial to both the husband and the wife.

Delicacy or modesty is an ideal instinct of our nature, and therefore in its origin wholly unconnected with the exercise of reason : for we are prompted to it without reflection ; we fix its extent by our natural feelings, and we determine the degree of its infraction by the same means. Though it is purely ideal, yet, as imposing a restraint on licentious actions, by the displeasure which the breach of it naturally creates in an unwilling passive party and a neutral person, and in exalting human nature through the loveliness we instinctively attach to it in respect of either sentiment or action, it is a positive moral good. Each sex, exclusively among themselves, are generally sensible to delicacy, as far as relates to a wanton infraction of it : but when one commits an act primarily indelicate before another of the same sex out of pressing necessity, the disgust arising is comparatively small, and may, in most instances, be easily and completely obviated by familiarity, common habit, or custom. Between two persons, one of each sex, there is mutually a much greater sense of delicacy ; and the fair sex especially have a higher sense of this virtue than men, as it respects the actions or situation of the one sex being witnessed or known by the other ; and in case of either sex, whether the action or situation was wanton, or arose out of unavoidable accident or indispensable necessity, yet in the instance of wantonness, the disgust to the world, in general, at the perpetrator of indelicacy, is greater than in that of accident or necessity. Men, too, have a higher sense of delicacy, as it respects the female sex, than them-

selves. With these modifications, and subject to these restrictions, the infraction of delicacy usually creates disgust; except as to the party committing or suffering, when the breach is accompanied by more or less privacy and lustful ideas, as in the case of the accoucheur; and except as to a depraved person, when it is committed or viewed by him with malignity or advantage; and lastly, except in a party vulgarly enjoying comparatively trifling indecencies in action, or indecent expressions, as a subject of ridicule. This natural disgust may be partly or wholly obliterated, in particular instances, by the individual being habituated to the commission or suffering of the particular indelicacy, yet habit does not inevitably in all persons obliterate the disgust in such instances; or disgust may be obliterated, in a slight degree, by the novel adoption, in the particular instance, of a general custom. Nothing can wholly efface, in an individual of sound mind, natural disgust at indelicacy in general; for the commonest prostitute would inwardly feel indignant at the man, who would maliciously and forcibly expose her person publicly, in a much greater degree, than for a malicious assault, committed with equal violence, but without indelicacy.

By our natural instincts we determine that those actions, besides some others, are positively indelicate, which are calculated, in the direct instance, or by analogy, to excite in a party or other person, though in fact they may or may not excite, unlawful lust; and in proportion to the extent of their capacity to excite, is our sense of their indelicacy. This indelicacy, when wanton and unnecessary, is a positive moral evil, because it is thus calculated to incite an unlawful passion, and because in an unwilling passive party or a neutral disapproving person, it is injurious by wounding the feelings. As creating painful sensations in those who are not parties to it, yet conscious of it, and where others are unconscious of it, as debasing the nature of the parties individually, it is, beyond its capacity of exciting lust, morally criminal, as well in the party wilfully and directly permitting as in the party committing it. Absolute necessity, or an unavoidable incident, obviates the moral guilt of indelicacy. In reluctantly becoming personally the object of indelicacy by compulsion, stratagem, or necessity, and with or without lust in the perpetrator, though the passive party is morally innocent, yet Providence has wisely determined both sexes to abhor indelicacy in such a case, at the instant and retrospectively, as in other instances, even as it respects the sufferer; by means of our natural sensibility—on account of the ideal excellence of personal delicacy, and innocence therein, and of natural perfection; and of proximity to personal innocence and natural perfection. The disgust is equally great, both to the innocent sufferer and

the world, in respect of the indelicacy of the innocent sufferer, whether the indelicacy was, on the part of the perpetrator, wanton or necessary, or was the result of accident. A person would instinctively feel himself to be personally abased, though without self-reproach, or the reproach of the world, at becoming personally the unwilling object of indelicacy; and he would instinctively rate another morally innocent sufferer to be abased in person, without thinking that other liable to reproach, on witnessing or even at being credibly informed of the commission of indelicacy by compulsion or stratagem on him. The fair sex, having a higher sense of delicacy than the other, and men naturally esteeming delicacy in women more than in themselves, the sense of abasement arising from indelicacy in the two cases just mentioned, when applied to these positions, is then greater. The degree of abasement is of course proportioned to the extent of the indelicacy suffered. Experience fully supports this doctrine. I will instance a strong case, which will confirm it. A modest girl, or wife, is violated. The monster, who has committed the act, is apprehended, and meets with the fate he deserves. Why does he merit capital punishment; why is the case more than that of a heinous assault; why is the momentary commission of indelicacy and impartment of terror such an aggravation? Because she has been forcibly despoiled of her personal innocence, or proximity to personal innocence: that is, because the girl, or wife, and her friends, and the world, feel that she has received, not merely a transitory past, but a present personal injury of an ideal nature from the indelicacy, of which she was morally an innocent sufferer; and because lust, being the most powerful of all the passions, and readily to be gratified by violence, requires rigid laws to restrain the unlawful and forcible exercise of it. Legal punishment is not, or ought not to be, proportioned to the moral guilt of the offender; it is proportioned to the extent of the temporal injury, and the temptation and facility for committing it. The enduring injury, in this case, is obviously of the nature I have been describing. Moral innocence, however, in all cases, according to our natural instincts, instantaneously obviates a part of the disgust, arising from the indelicacy of the situation of the innocent sufferer.

In cases of man-midwifery, the accoucheur's assistance, when viewed abstractedly, and considered without the prejudices of custom, we instinctively determine to be an instance of the greatest indelicacy; we naturally feel that indelicacy cannot proceed much further, without at the instant changing the scene from a private to a public exposure. In the first place, the nature of the personal assistance is such, that a surgical operation necessarily performed by a surgeon even on a man, with comparatively equal bodily

exposure and indelicate contact, might, by its uncommonness, raise a slight feeling of disgust. In the next place, the indelicacy is immensely aggravated by the circumstance of the parties being of different sexes ; and lastly, as respects the sufferer, the aggravation is enhanced by the peculiar sensibility to delicacy in a female, which she feels, and the world feels in respect of her present or past situation. The accoucheur feels no disgust at this great indelicacy ; he is supported by lust, interest, and habit, and receives pleasure. The innocent sufferer and the world have a due sense of his indelicacy. The sufferer and the world feel the indelicacy of her situation ; but her moral innocence, when she is innocent, instantaneously obviates in both a portion of it. Mankind, in general, are equally sensible with herself of the indelicacy, so far as to perceive its extent ; but her feeling of it, as a reluctant sufferer, is rendered more painful through the law of self-preservation : and many others feel the indelicacy with various degrees of pain in proportion to the love or respect they have for her. The wife, as an immediate sufferer, feels much uneasiness ; and on account of her sex is peculiarly susceptible of self-abasement from her situation. The husband, being in common with other men more sensible to personal abasement, as it relates to female sufferers than to those of his own sex, partakes of this greater sensibility in respect of her to whom he is united ; and on account of his love for her has considerable uneasiness, which is much increased through the ideal excellence in marriage of exclusive personal possession. Moreover, his indignation for the injury is excited by the artifice, if any, which has been practised on her ; and is kindled, in an extraordinary degree, in the case of his own wife, because of the affection which he has for her, and the extent of uneasiness which he is made to suffer.

Marriage is as natural to man, as an indiscriminate intercourse between the sexes would be impolitic and unnatural. Though a man of wanton imagination be so far settled as to fix on a mistress, yet his love being only sensual, his pleasures are soon sated with the same object. The continuance of their union is unfixed, and there is no lasting confidence between them. Reflection reproaches him with having been the destroyer of her innocence, or at least with fostering impurity : he visits her by stealth ; and solitude and guilt are her associates. When the parties eventually separate, his fortune is probably ruined with her extravagance, and her future condition is attended by disgrace and misery. Shame and remorse accompanied their connexion, and they leave each other with mutual upbraidings. But let us change the scene to that of a virtuous union. Marriage promotes order in society, secures a home for the female sex, and protects the states of infancy and

childhood. Without marriage, relationship would be mostly conjectural, and consequently the endearing ties of kindred would be nearly extinct. The virtuous and happy pair have spontaneously chosen each other from the world. Their union has been formed on deliberation and inquiry, as to the character and disposition of each other, and as to the reasonable prospects of securing such a provision as they may mutually think adequate. Their love is mutual and constant; and though its sensations are not so vivid in their ordinary course, as shortly after a youthful marriage, yet, supported by reciprocal confidence, it is capable of being considerably enjoyed, till the infirmities of age advance, and even then settles into perfect esteem and unalterable regard. The highest pleasures of sense are trifling in comparison with the felicity of their ideal love. Their disagreements are therefore readily pacified. They overlook each other's personal defects: they participate in each other's joys and sorrows; and thus contribute to the former, and alleviate the latter. Liable to outward injuries and distress in common with others, these evils do not affect their mutual regard. Their interchange of love produces a reciprocity of interests and good offices, and an anxious regard for mutually exclusive possession of person. Esteeming their persons as sacred to each other, the ideal restraints of sex common to other modest minds are instinctively, as between themselves, privately obliterated by being intermingled and incorporated in their sense of union. Before the world their conjugal sense of modesty is equal to their individual sense of it previous to their union; and their individual sense of this feeling is increased by their mutual anxiety to preserve it in each other. To them modesty is more than a negative good; it possesses an indescribable charm, a peculiar pleasure. For these reasons any infringement of delicacy committed by a stranger of the other sex on the person of the one, though it should be compulsive, would be viewed by the other even as it respects the sufferer with abhorrence, and as it respects the wilful perpetrator with peculiar indignation. These feelings are engrafted in us by the wisdom of Providence. They support the ties of marriage. They aim at perfection in our nature: they are compatible with virtue; and worthy of the dignity of man, of his reason, and his immortality.

Custom may, to a certain extent, reconcile what would otherwise be a gross outrage on the feelings; but I appeal to the candor of the generality of readers, both single and married, whether a professional degree, conferred only by a human institution, can, on an occasion of man-midwifery, efface the natural restraints of female delicacy, and thus subvert the order of nature, although a surgeon may have a good moral character, and be ever

so much respected ; whether it is not natural for both husband and wife to have a lasting and secret repugnance to the practice which I am censuring, however a sense of delicacy may stifle the expression to others of their individual sentiments, or when solicited, even sometimes urge a disavowal of them.

After what has been said to point out the reality of personal abasement, though connected with moral innocence, I wish it to be distinctly understood, that the idea of this abasement ought not to be fostered beyond the ordinary limits of our natural instincts. Where the case is one of unconscious or unwilling suffering of indelicacy, moral innocence always carries a charm, which by reflection may almost or quite extinguish personal self-abasement in the sufferer ; and in respect of another person being the sufferer, the charm of moral innocence, added to the sympathy of a man of common sensibility will, on reflection, nearly or wholly dispel in him the feeling of personal abasement, in respect of that other person, as often as the particular occasion arises in his mind. Moral innocence instinctively and instantaneously, as I formerly observed, obviates a part of the feeling of personal abasement, and reflection and sympathy reduce the rest. Indignation, however, at the wilful perpetrator survives, and is proportioned to the extent of crime in the particular case, and the circumstances of aggravation or extenuation. This indignation may be properly manifested for the same reasons, that all evil offenders in general ought to be punished, without harboring revengeful feelings towards them. How many instances have occurred of girls seduced under a promise of marriage, who, for want of the reflections which these remarks suggest, and without considering the restraints of religion under the heaviest guilt, and the fortitude and consolations it supplies in the worst distresses, have been so impetuously urged by a sensibility to personal self-abasement, as to commit suicide ! Here, by the way, is a striking proof of the reality and violence of this feeling. However, in some cases the hopelessness of a still ardent love, and the consciousness of the unfortunate object that she is far from moral innocence, may be concurrent causes for the rash act ; and the general disappointment, without reference to the seduction or to the hopelessness of love, may be another cause : yet there are many cases which entirely except the first point ; and in consequence of the extreme youth and artlessness of the unfortunate object, and other extenuating circumstances may, notwithstanding she consented to the seduction, conscious she was unmarried, nearly except the second point ; and the third is of comparatively trifling importance. Indeed, in most cases of this nature, even where these causes strongly co-operated, the redemption of personal inno-

cence, even without moral innocence, had the redemption been possible with or without it, would have been the redemption of life.

I will cite from ancient history an instance of unquestionable authority connected with this part of the present subject, and with it will close my observations on this head. I hope that such of my readers as having read the case before, well recollect the particulars, will excuse my relating it fully for the sake of others. It forms a peculiarly striking example both of the reality and of the universality of the idea of personal abasement, without moral guilt; of the extraordinary and unjustifiable extreme to which this feeling may be carried, and of the dreadful consequences thereby arising. It likewise exemplifies the violent power of lust; and the great sacrifice of interest, and the mean devices which will be resorted to, in order to gratify it.

Appius (a Roman consul), sitting one day on his tribunal to dispense justice, saw a maiden of exquisite beauty, aged about fifteen, passing to one of the public schools, attended by a matron, her nurse. The charms of the damsel, heightened by all the innocence of virgin modesty, caught his attention, and fired his heart. The day following, as she passed, he found her still more beautiful, and his breast still more inflamed. He now therefore resolved to obtain the gratification of his passion, whatever should be the consequence, and found means to inform himself of the virgin's name and family. Her name was Virginia. She was the daughter of Virginius, a centurion, then with the army in the field; and had been contracted to Icilius, formerly a tribune of the people, who had agreed to marry her at the end of the present campaign. Appius, at first, resolved to break this match, and to espouse her himself; but the laws of the Twelve Tables had forbidden the patricians to intermarry with the plebeians, and he could not infringe these, as he was the enactor of them. Nothing therefore remained but a criminal enjoyment, which, as he was long used to the indulgence of his passions, he resolved to obtain. After having vainly tried to corrupt the fidelity of her nurse, he had recourse to another expedient still more wicked. He fixed upon one Claudius, who had long been the minister of his pleasures, to assert that the beautiful maid was his slave, and to refer the cause to Appius's tribunal for decision. Claudius behaved exactly according to his instructions; for taking with him a band of ruffians like himself, he entered into the public school, where Virginia was found among her female companions, and seizing upon her, under pretence that she was the daughter of one of his slaves, was dragging her away, when he was prevented by the people drawn together by her cries. At length after the first heat of opposition was over, he led the weeping virgin to the tribunal of Appius, and there plausibly exposed his pretensions. Claudius asserted that she was born in his house, of a female slave, who sold her to the wife of Virginius, who had been childless: that he had credible evidences to prove the truth of what he advanced; but that until they should come together, it was but reasonable that the slave should be delivered into his custody, he being her proper master. Appius pretended to be struck with the justice of his claim; he observed, that if the reputed father himself were present, he might indeed be willing to delay the delivery of the maid, but that it was not lawful for him, in the present case, to detain her from her master. He therefore adjudged her to Claudius as his slave, to be kept by

him till Virginius should arrive, and be able to prove his paternity. This sentence was received with loud clamors and reproaches by the multitude, particularly by the women, who came round the innocent Virginia, desirous to protect her from the judge's fury; while Icilius, her lover, boldly opposed the decree, and obliged Claudius to take refuge under the tribunal of the decemvir. All things now threatened an open insurrection, when Appius, fearing the event, thought proper to suspend his judgment till the arrival of Virginius, who was then about eleven miles from Rome, with the army. The day following was fixed for the trial. In the meantime, Appius privately sent letters to the general to confine Virginius, as his arrival in town might only serve to kindle sedition among the people. The letters, however, being intercepted by the centurion's friends, they sent him a full relation of the design laid against the liberty and the honor of his only daughter. Virginius, upon this, pretending the death of a near relation, got permission to leave the camp, and hastened to Rome, inspired with indignation and revenge. Accordingly the next day, to the astonishment of Appius, he appeared before the tribunal, leading his weeping daughter by the hand; both of them habited in deep mourning. Claudius, the accuser, began by making his demand in plausible terms, supported by the false testimony of a female slave, whom he had corrupted. Virginius next spoke in turn: he represented that his wife married young; had early bore a child; had been seen pregnant by numbers. That if he had had intentions of adopting a suppositious child, he should have fixed upon a boy rather than a girl; that it was notorious to all, that his wife had herself suckled this daughter; and that it was surprising such a claim should be made after a fifteen years' silence, and not till Virginia was become marriageable, and acknowledged to be exquisitely beautiful. While the father spoke this with a stern air, the eyes of all were turned on Virginia; who stood trembling with looks of persuasive eloquence and excessive grief, which added weight to his remonstrances, and excited compassion. The people satisfied of the cruelty of the case raised an outcry, expressive of their indignation. Appius, fearing that what had been said might have a dangerous effect upon the multitude, and under a pretence of being sufficiently instructed in the merits of the cause, with rage interrupted him, "Yes," said he, "my conscience obliges me to declare that I myself am a witness to the truth of the deposition of Claudius. Most of this assembly know that I was left guardian to him. I was early apprised that he had a right to this young slave; but public affairs, and the dissensions of the people, have prevented my doing him justice. However, it is not now too late; and by the power vested in me for the general good, I adjudge Virginia to be the property of Claudius, the plaintiff. Go, therefore, lictors, disperse the multitude, and make room for the master to repossess himself of the slave." The lictors, in obedience to his command, drove off the throng that pressed round the tribunal: they seized upon Virginia, and were delivering her up into the hands of Claudius, when Virginius, who found that all was over, seemed to acquiesce in the sentence. He, however, mildly entreated of Appius to be permitted to take a last farewell of a child, whom he had at least considered as his own, and, so satisfied, he would return to his duty with fresh alacrity. Appius granted the favor, upon condition that their endearments should pass in his presence. But Virginius was then meditating a dreadful resolution. The crowd made way, and Virginius, with the most poignant anguish, taking his almost expiring daughter in his arms, for a while supported her head upon his breast, and wiped away the tears that trickled down her cheeks. He most tenderly embraced her, and drawing her insensibly to some shops which were on the side of the forum, snatched up a butcher's knife—"My dearest, lost child," cried Virginius,

thus, thus alone is it in my power to preserve your honor and your freedom!" So saying, he plunged the weapon into her heart. Then drawing it out, reeking with her blood, he held it up to Appius,—“Tyrant,” cried he, “by this blood I devote thy head to the infernal gods!” Thus saying, and covered with his daughter’s blood, the knife remaining in his hand, threatening destruction to whomsoever should oppose him, he ran through the city, wildly calling upon the people to strike for freedom. By the favor of the multitude, he then mounted his horse, and rode directly to the camp. He no sooner arrived, followed by a number of his friends, than he informed the army of all that had been done, still holding the bloody knife in his hand. He asked their pardon, and the pardon of the gods, for having committed so rash an action, but ascribed it to the dreadful necessity of the times. The army, already predisposed, immediately with shouts echoed their approbation, and decamping, left the generals behind, to take their station once more upon Mount Aventine, whither they had retired about forty years before. The other army, which had been to oppose the Sabines, felt a like resentment, and came over in large parties to join them.” Appius eventually died by his own hands in prison.

Having expatiated on the idea of personal abasement, as connected with man-midwifery, I will add a few words on the practicability and propriety of the husband restraining this feeling where his wife is morally innocent. The interests of both husband and wife are concerned in his doing so. The cases in which moral innocence, or an extremely near approach to it, occur, are, where the wife was previously ignorant of the nature and extent of what eventually took place, even in the ordinary practice of the accoucheur; or where unfortunately the inadequacy of a midwife of the present day, to the great difficulty of the particular case, rendered a surgeon necessary; or where the force and prejudice of a general and very prevalent custom, and the restraints of delicacy, added to the natural incapacity of a female, as I have before explained, to be equally ready with a man to detect the impure motives of the accoucheur, prevented the wife from making an exposure calculated to avert the occasion. Love, considered as an ideal passion between the sexes, and apart from the lustful appetite and sensual pleasures, is purely instinctive in its origin, consequently it always originates spontaneously: nevertheless, though it cannot be founded on reason, some other of the passions, and even reason also, will often, through adventitious circumstances, facilitate, support, repair, check, or extinguish it. The charm of moral innocence, besides instinctively and instantaneously having a partial effect, and the sympathy of a husband of common sensibility for the misfortune which his wife has innocently and repugantly suffered, will, on reflection, countervail in him the ideal blemish of it. Her endearing tenderness and their mutual confidence will confirm this disposition in him. These considerations and circumstances support his affections, and his reason affords him the pleasing satisfaction of having acted conscientiously.

Personal abasement, though accompanied by moral innocence at the time, is not merely an evil itself, but it may easily become, and frequently is, eventually, a fruitful source of other evils. I do not mean to insinuate that the moral feeling is thus necessarily abandoned in part or altogether; yet as the practice of man-midwifery most assuredly tends to weaken in a female that rational self-respect which every modest wife feels a laudable pride in preserving, and every affectionate husband a pleasure in supporting, the moral feeling certainly may in weak minds be more or less endangered by this infringement on self-respect. Indeed any wife, whose religious and moral principles are not deeply rooted, may thus become more readily entangled in the snares of licentiousness. Indelicacy, admitted under specious pretexts, may become familiar: the ideal excellence of modesty may thus become gradually in a great measure obliterated; and religion and virtue, for want of due reflection thereon, may not have timely authority to check the growing evil, and the temptations to vice. But should her principles be too firm for the facility afforded to the allurements to evil in this way, her conjugal love may be impaired thus: suppose the most favorable instance; that the wife is morally innocent of indelicacy, yet she will most probably conceal the nature and extent of the accoucheur's interference from her husband, and perhaps he is not aware of the extent of even ordinary interference. The accoucheur and the wife thus keep a secret together; a secret always premeditated on his part, and of such a nature as to be a gratifying tribute to the self-importance and intrigue of the latter. Now mutual confidence is the chief support of love; it should be unlimited between the husband and wife, but here is an inroad on it. Besides, a breach being extensively made in it by one man, a farther way is more readily opened for him or others. Thus, her conjugal love is perhaps impaired, and here is one evil; and the wife becomes more open to new impressions. The several causes just described, for some consequential evils of personal self-abasement, as referable to the practice of man-midwifery, may consistently concur, and by their united force be more likely to produce, as I believe they have sometimes done, indifference and incontinence in the wife; and thus, without superadding as a cause a licentious familiarity, not exceedingly improbable to subsist, between her and the accoucheur. But the husband may not be out of the question on this point: perhaps, finding his wife's affections estranged, and her temper towards him soured, he may for want of prudence and firmness of principle take the lead in infidelity to his marriage-vows. Another cause emanating from this fruitful source of evil, the idea of personal abasement, may produce in him a like effect. He may have suggested to his wife,

and urged her by all the persuasion of which he was capable, to adopt the assistance of a midwife; and finding his remonstrances to be vain, and, as is very probable, not having the presence of mind, from the novelty and seeming difficulties of such a resistance, to insist on the accomplishment, if fairly practicable, of his praiseworthy wishes, he may become so disgusted at her misconduct, and at the freedom of access to his fireside subsequently assumed by the man who has injured his peace (and to which he foolishly submits), as to be urged by severe provocation, and a spirit of retaliation, to run into dissoluteness. He should, instead of thus resorting, reflect that he ought to pursue upright, but decisive means to protect or solace his feelings; that by the step he is taking, he is bringing misery on himself, and perhaps his children too, as well as his wife; and that the offence of another cannot justify his wickedness. And here, the narrow-minded censurer will exclaim, is an instance of the general evil tendency of such a publication as this. I will shortly reply by observing, that until he can prove a reasonableness in repealing wholesome and essentially expedient laws, for the sake of obviating the penalties arising from their occasional infraction, I will not admit the propriety of his remark.

The objections to the accoucheur's attendance do not end here. The previous remarks, as far as relate to the disgust and abhorrence arising out of the practice of man-midwifery, are, by complication, chiefly applicable both to husband and wife; but the lamentable consequences to females, of their mental feelings in such cases, come next under consideration. And here I will remind the reader of what I formerly remarked, as to the nature and gross indelicacy of the accoucheur's ordinary assistance in common and regular cases of labor, and of an observation before made, that an extraordinary abuse of occasionally interfering early in the progress of a labor, under pretence of ascertaining the progress made, or what length of time the practitioner may appropriate to other distant pursuits, is commonly practised. The virtuous and affectionate wife naturally views and reflects on the personal liberties of any other man than her husband, though for a purpose sanctioned by custom, with detestation and horror; as a female she is more susceptible of personal delicacy; and surely on such an occasion as that which forms the present subject, beyond most others, at such a moment, the female mind ought not to be unnecessarily agitated or depressed. Every one knows that the sympathy between the mind and the body may be exemplified in numerous ways, and it is frequently instanced in cases of man-midwifery. It is an undeniable fact, that the presence and interference of a surgeon during childbirth operate on the female

mind, by the dread and repugnance arising from a sense of delicacy, so as generally to throw back the labor, and consequently to render it lingering; especially with regard to a young female, whose first case, if no unfavorable causes supervene in others, is on this account most critical during the delivery. Even the expected approach of a surgeon will sometimes produce a like effect. In such cases surgeons may be truly said to contribute to the occasional necessity for artificial aid. It will be unnecessary to comment on these indisputable facts, and on the obviously increased pain and debility, and sometimes difficult and unnatural labors, lasting complaints, or even fatal consequences, which are thus superinduced to the female sex.

The dangers to health and life, arising from the direct bodily injuries occasioned by unnecessary artificial operations in the accoucheur's practice, sometimes occur from the impulse of another passion besides lust. I have before explained the probability of these, the worst of abuses, happening under the sway of a lustful passion. Horrid to relate, the mother sometimes receives an irremediable bodily injury, or the lives of her and the child, or of the one of them, are sacrificed by an accoucheur, who, prompted by a desire of professional fame, has resorted to the exercise of a dangerous artificial operation in childbirth; though conscious at the very time either that nature herself would have beneficially effected the object pursued, or at the least that a due time had not been allowed to ascertain whether she could effect it; or that a more simple operation than that performed would have effectually answered the purpose. Now lust and an ambitious desire of professional fame may co-operate to produce these dreadful consequences. If we add to these temptations the convenience of opportunity, the ready pretence for the occasion, the extreme difficulty of detection, the hacknied feelings of the accoucheur, and the depravity which experience shows us that thousands of persons previously unsuspected are found to possess, the picture is complete, *the crime will be perpetrated*. Is this hazard to be longer willingly permitted? Gracious God, how often are we ourselves respectively, by inconsiderate obstinacy or negligence, the instruments of our own misery! But let the perpetrator remember, that there is One unto whom every heart is open, and every action fully displayed; One, from whose omnipotence and displeasure he cannot shelter himself.

While on this part of my subject, I will quote a passage from one of the public letters of Sir Anthony Carlisle, that which appears in the Times journal of the 1st of May last, signed with his name. As a medical gentleman of high respectability and repute, and of an experienced age, his observations contain a luminous

exposure, and carry with them an irresistible authority ; and being the first of the profession, in the recent agitation of the present important subject, thus publicly and signally to reject the shackles of interest, combination, and prejudice, which are common to that, and in a greater or less degree to every profession, he has intitled himself to public esteem. That part of his letter to which I allude is as follows.

“It is my firm conviction, that the establishment and the further prevalence of man-midwifery, sanctioned as a branch of surgery, would compromise the justice of the country, by exposing the lives of child-bed women and infants to many dangerous and unnecessary secret operations. Under this impression, I should be passively dishonest if I were to neglect the severe duty of asserting my professional thoughts. Having devoted as much time to the study of the elementary sciences, which constitute the only safe foundation for the healing art, as any of my contemporaries, and having from long continued meditation and from experience endeavored to distinguish the means which help and those which are hurtful in the perilous business of surgery, I am free to confess that I view the operations of man-midwives as the most uncertain and the most violent of surgical enterprises. In common with many of the best informed physiologists, I regard the birth of the human race as a purely natural process, most wisely and sufficiently secured by the unerring ordinations of Providence ; and I am professionally assured that it is always mischievous to tamper with pregnant women, under the pretence of hastening, easing, or retarding the most portentous and delicate work of the creation. Man-midwives allege that their interference is ‘a consequence of civilisation, which depraves the natural habits of women,’ forgetting the notoriety of a law to compel poor unmarried females to disclose their condition, because the known frequency of its concealment leads to a capital crime : while, among the highly-civilised and numberless ladies and women of China and the East Indies, they universally employ ordinary matrons in the sanctuary of childbirth, and would revolt with horror from any proposal to admit the presence of a man. That educated men should submit to be associated with nurses and gossips for whole days and nights, merely to wait the humiliating events of parturition, is contrary to decency and common sense. Man-midwives, therefore, teach their disciples to assume directorial offices, and to be curiously or officiously meddling under various pretences, by which the terrified and shocked distressed object is rendered obedient ; and when the operator’s patience begins to fail, or his predictions are at fault, he rushes into the perilous adventure of using his conjectural desperate art : and I confidently

believe, that *the increasing number of deaths to mothers and infants, as well as the pretended difficulties in midwifery, are mainly, if not altogether, imputable to such undue or improper interference.*

Whenever a degree of violence dangerous to the life of parent or child is meditated, the moral propriety of it should be confided to physicians, or hospital surgeons, of enlarged intellect. My present purpose is, therefore, to awaken the attention of the legal authorities of this kingdom, and to prepare them for deeds which must arouse the indignation of parties who may suffer from the audacity of young adventurers in surgical midwifery. Even before this innovation, it cannot be denied that many rash surgeons have been hurried by vanity, or from pecuniary necessity urged, to *seek premature vulgar fame, by attempting unjustifiable operations*, trusting that fatal results would be hushed for the sake of the character of the profession : and my own experience in a metropolitan general hospital, where every medical officer is kept in check by rivals, has induced me to hold public consultations in the presence of all the students, in order to prevent questionable enterprises. If such precaution is needful in public practice, what security can we find in the privacy of a lying-in room, and where surgical acts of violence may be passed over without inquiry ? The public are not aware that the self-constituted teachers of what is now termed 'the obstetric art and science' are not any of them general hospital surgeons, or hospital physicians ; and their assumed authority to dictate to surgeons' pupils the terms on which they may commit irremediable injuries to women, or destruction to infants, are not sanctioned by law. I do not announce these alarming statements unadvisedly, but from serious apprehensions, awakened by the flippancy with which man-midwives write and speak of *sacrificing a child, or wounding the vital parts of a mother.*"

Perhaps it will be said that as the desire of fame alike affects both sexes, the atrocious evils I have just described would, when urged by this passion, be equally applicable to scientific midwives as to accoucheurs. They would not. Experience abundantly shows us, that, speaking generally, women not only possess as much fortitude as men on trying occasions, but the sex are naturally more humane, and particularly with reference to cases of a wanton infliction of direct corporal cruelty. In general, the girl will not participate in the cruelties which divert the schoolboy. The same woman that would defend her infant from personal danger at the peril of her life, would most likely be more prompt and zealous in her expressions of detestation of a case of great wanton cruelty that was presented to her view, than men, in general, would be under similar circumstances. Therefore, the

ambition or the impatience which urges some accoucheurs to perform what they are conscious at the time is unnecessary, and attended with extreme pain and cruelty to the mother, would enter into the minds of comparatively very few midwives, perhaps of none, equally conscious of its character and consequences : and even if either feeling did present itself to a midwife, it is almost certain that humanity would prompt her to abandon it. It must not be forgotten, too, that such atrocious abuses, when proceeding from lust, are wholly inapplicable to midwives.

Having now adverted to the various natural evils of different degrees of enormity directly and consequentially arising out of the practice of man-midwifery, the reader will readily perceive from the observations which I have made on them, and his own reflections, that some are universally irremediable in such practice, and that for the others no universal, or indeed general, nor permanent remedy can be supplied, so long as that practice is continued. It is obvious, therefore, that to extinguish these evils, the system of midwifery now in use must be subverted, by recurring to the old unobjectionable and salutary system ; that which was uniformly and successfully practised in all nations for thousands of years, without a shadow of complaint.

As some of the sentiments expressed in this tract rest part of their importance on the just rights and natural properties of a married state, and as the political theorist has sometimes disputed the propriety of marriage being wholly unrestricted, and the debauchee has sometimes asserted that only a general indiscriminate intercourse between the sexes is purely natural, I hope it will not be considered a digression from the present subject to add a brief elementary disquisition to show that marriage alone, and not indiscriminate intercourse, is, as a general system, originally and purely natural ; and that the interests of society require the one to be encouraged, and the other discountenanced. Besides, the discussion, as it refers to general nature, will facilitate the introduction of a few important observations immediately on the subject of the proposed reformation. In the sense in which I apply this term, marriage, it is an agreement between two persons of different sexes to cohabit, in exclusion of other sexual intercourse on the part of either of them ; and the union is urged by love, and mutually and solemnly agreed between them to be continued, as long as both the parties live : whether this agreement is confirmed by marriage-rites, or other ceremony, according to the custom of the country, or is considered to be honorably and inviolably binding by the private understanding between the parties. I do not mean, however, to insinuate, but that a legal religious ceremony and a public register of marriages have great advantages in society, by

imposing deliberation and solemnity on a contract of such immense importance to the parties, and rendering the marriage, as it ought to be, notorious to the world. Our laws are therefore right in declaring the issue illegitimate, when, in a marriage in this country, the ceremony is not observed, with a view to enforce the observance, which is a moral duty. Such is the importance of the benefits to individuals and society, which I have before described, as derived from matrimony: such are the obvious disorder, defects, and mischiefs of indiscriminate intercourse: such is the natural inclination generally of mankind, individually, for the one, and their aversion to the other, that, like the birds of the air, they instinctively pair, and countenance this practical union in others. Again, there is another cogent argument, showing that marriage is natural. The reality of natural modesty will not be questioned. It is directly opposed to indiscriminate intercourse, while it is congenial to marriage. I speak of mankind in general: of course there will always be licentiousness, as there are other vices, because of the great depravity of a portion of every large society. Marriage is not confined to civilised states; it will practically be more or less found in nearly, or quite, all barbarous nations. But if it were only to be found in those civilised, if natural instinct had no part in its institution, and it were wholly the result of reason and civilisation, it would be no less founded on nature. Civilisation is purely natural; it is a natural result of reason; reason forms part of man's nature, and the exercise of it is as natural to him as the exercise of his passions. Sometimes, his reason and his passions act together; sometimes either has an ascendancy over the other. The enlightened understanding, like a plant flourishing in a cultivated soil, is an instance of superior nature—of nature improved by reason, which is itself a part of nature. Man's reason has the capacity, by the natural exercise of it, and by information derived from social intercourse, to improve itself, and other nature too; by which means, nature improves nature. The mind of the savage, like a plant stunted for want of culture, is an instance of imperfect or rude nature. The uncultivated plant, flourishing in a congenial soil and climate, is, on the same principle of similitude, like the mental powers of a man of great natural genius, breaking forth and flourishing through his own individual acquirements; and the uncultivated plant stunted in a sterile soil is like a man of uncultured and inferior mental capacity. Terrestrial nature, animate and inanimate, suitably to our temporary state of trial, is liable to outward accident, and is otherwise imperfect; nevertheless, mankind in general are enabled, by proper dispositions and measures, to render their lives, on the whole, tolerably comfortable and happy. The instincts of the brute crea-

tion being confined, are perfect to their purposes ; for they have no resource. Man's instincts, his imaginations and his passions, are unrestrained to a great extent, because of his probationary state of existence ; and therefore they are often intemperate, irregular, or imperfect in the exercise of them, as in the case of man-midwifery ; but he has reason to prevent his errors, and if his errors be obnoxious to others, their reason, prompted by the natural law of self-preservation, will urge them, if they possess spirit and opportunity, to correct these errors when he neglects or refuses, and by anticipating to prevent their recurrence. This reason itself may be imperfect ; it may be checked by passions ; it may be blinded by prejudice insinuated by custom ; it may err through ignorance or mistake of simply perceptible facts, or through inadvertence ; or it may err through a chain of deductions, in which some one or more of these causes of error may be involved and operate ; and it may be erroneous or confined through comparative mental weakness or considerable inaction in particular instances. Therefore human reason and the passions may co-operate, and yet be in error ; and reason may erroneously check or increase the passions. All our knowlege is derived directly from mental perceptions, arising from the exercise of our bodily senses ; and from instinctive originally ideal perceptions, and, consequentially, from reason ; and from recollection and social information thus originating. Our mental perceptions, whether derived from the bodily senses or originally ideal, are confined ; for without reason they pervade no spirit but that of the individual, and they pervade a comparatively small part only, and that imperfectly of space and matter, and a still smaller part at one time in each respective individual. For this cause, human reason which is exercised on positive perceptions, or recollection or information thereof, is limited and liable to error ; but it has frequently the power of exercising itself on positive perceptions, or recollection or certain information thereof, more or less remotely connected with the inference to be drawn ; and thus of sometimes supplying the defect by conclusive presumption, either as to spirit, space, or matter. Man, however, can often improve and correct his perceptions and reason by further exercising them, and by the interposition and assistance of those of others. God has endowed us with great powers of reason ; and abstracted from the causes of error and restraint just mentioned, human reason, intrinsically, has perfect and infinite capacity. It is of the greatest importance to us ; and therefore to speak meanly of human reason, in general, is an attempt, however good or bad the motive, to degrade human nature. True religion is, and necessarily must be, wholly guided by sound reason ; and has for its objects devotion to Almighty God, and charity to the world.

From what has been said, showing that human reason in this life is a part of terrestrial nature, it is evident that though we make a verbal distinction for the sake of definition between nature on the one hand, and the natural improvements which we denominate literature and the arts and sciences on the other, the latter are an integral part of the former. As the bees, by means of their bodily powers and instincts, collect from the flowers of the fields the materials by which they contrive and form the combs which are adapted to their uses, so mankind, by means of their bodily powers and reason, collect the mineral ore, from which they form and contrive the watches which are adapted to their uses. The ore is nature unimproved; the watch is nature improved by natural reason, that is nature : improved, because the end and design of sublunary nature is to administer to man, who is beyond comparison the chief of this nature. True it is, that all the same kinds of bees in every part of the globe form their combs alike, and finish them perfect; whereas comparatively few men are employed in manufacturing watches, whole nations are ignorant of the art, and they are constructed in various shapes and on different principles, and are sometimes imperfect in design. This remark, nevertheless, does not form any objection to the principle of similitude. The cause is this: the instincts of the brute creation are confined to a certain correct and undeviating course, and are equally applicable to all the individuals of the same species and state; but the powers of reason are variously and unequally distributed amongst and exercised by different persons for the individual or common good, and human reason is liable to error. Therefore the imperfect watch is an instance of imperfect nature; but we cannot pursue the similitude with a production instinctively formed by the brute creation, because what they construct is perfect in design, and can only become imperfect for its purpose by outward accident.

It is a moral duty to employ our reason, to improve our own nature where practicable, and to protect it from degeneration; and it is consequently a sin to wilfully exert this natural privilege to debase nature for the purpose of gratifying depraved passions—the passions of irregular nature. Virtue is the standard of natural perfection in the passions, besides piety to God; and the key or test of virtue in every modification of it is charity, sanctioned by sound reason. Therefore, let us exert our reason to protect our nature from the wilful and wicked debasement of it by man-midwifery; and may those who now practise it possess charity, so as to cordially desist in future.

One principle reason why I have said thus much about human reason and nature in general has been, to take an enlarged view of

the character, the rights and the properties of a married state ; and because the licentious have sometimes treated marriage as an unnatural restraint, imposed by a custom arising from an overweening gravity and prudence ; instead of what it is, whether proceeding from reason or instinct, a purely and originally natural institution, essential to the individual and political welfare and happiness of the community. Nevertheless, improvident matches are of course unjustifiable. Let the political economist, who may absurdly descry marriage as a general institution on account of a redundant population, turn his attention to fair and upright expedients : let him explain the advantages and facilities of emigration : let him exhort the people to beware of evil temptations, and a momentary gratification of unlawful feelings ; to be honestly diligent and prudent in promoting their temporal comforts ; to be constantly devout to Almighty God ; to be, both in the national government and individually, in charity with their fellow-creatures, including loyalty to their king and country ; and then, and not till then, to rely on a wise and constantly over-ruling Providence. A Providence which, though, in consideration of our probationary state, Divine Justice may never, or but seldom, specially and extraordinarily interpose, and certainly never miraculously does so at present ; still in its ordinary course promotes order, by generally affording to the religious and virtuous in this world the most heartfelt and undisturbed, the most constant and durable temporal enjoyments in prosperity, and to them only, fortitude and consolation in the hour of irremediable adversity. We may add, the greater security of bodily health, liberty, and safety ; and the certain peace of mind and hope, which are a foretaste of the perfect order in a future state. At the same time, let him discourage the gloom of the enthusiast, who is a burden to himself and to society ; and who performs only one-half, and that imperfectly, of the duty which God requires from him.

I now come to a pleasing part of my subject, to recommend a return to the practice of midwifery by midwives exclusively : to suggest, first, the best means, as an immediate and temporary expedient, of recurring to the adoption of midwives ; and, next, the proper mode of permanently and effectually establishing so desirable a purpose. It is particularly important to observe, that a recurrence to the ancient system is as well calculated to completely extinguish all the evils peculiar to the present system, as not to introduce a single new one. I shall presently show, too, that the practice of midwifery by midwives possesses, exclusively, important collateral advantages to society at large.

I will first take occasion, as it will be highly interesting with reference to the present subject, to advert to two important cir-

cumstances of late times mainly connected with the history of our country, which by the striking contrast they form to each other are signally admonitory instances, respectively, of the impropriety of the present system, and the propriety of recurring to the old system of midwifery. The first instance is that of the deplorable and tragical end of her who was the fond hope of the nation, our late amiable and deservedly lamented Princess Charlotte. Without the slightest intention of reflecting in the least degree on those who had the preparatory direction in her lingering and fatal accouchement, whom I firmly believe to have acted, though under the bias of an evil custom, to the best of their information and power, I will nevertheless venture to affirm, that if the assistance of a skilful and experienced midwife had been substituted for that of the late unfortunate Sir Richard Croft, her Royal Highness would, at least, have had a better chance of a successful issue. If any difficulty in the birth had still prevailed, (but which would not have been the case, as the authority I shall presently produce will show,) it would certainly not have been aggravated by that natural revolt of mind and body, which her delicate sensibility would cause her to sustain under actual circumstances. The other instance is that of our late worthy Queen Charlotte, the mother of a numerous and fine family, the mother of our gracious king: she was assisted by a midwife only in all her childbirths, and she lived to a good old age.

From the observations I have previously made on the natural process and general regularity of labors, it is obvious that cases of difficulty in the practice of the assistant are extremely uncommon. Cases requiring extraordinary but not difficult assistance from the practitioner, such as some of the common midwives of the present day are competent to, are moreover very unusual. Long and tedious labors, but requiring only ordinary assistance, are more common, yet, comparatively with childbirths in general, unfrequent. And here let me impress on the general reader, the distinction between labors more or less difficult in practice to the assistant, and what is termed a long and difficult labor, that is difficult to the mother only, but regular in its process, except as to time. From these remarks, it is evident that in almost all childbirths, and especially where a surgeon is not present, as is often the case with the lower orders of society, and is the case with nearly all such in Wales, the assistance of a common midwife is amply sufficient. Those mothers living remote from the metropolis, and who cannot conveniently procure a midwife from town scientifically acquainted with her profession, would do well to have a common experienced midwife, who may be readily obtained in the country; it will be easily ascertained from her whether she is

quite competent, as is most probable, to adjust small irregularities in labors, which however are very unfrequent; and having a proper person in readiness to apply for a surgeon, if the labor should perchance prove difficult to the practitioner, he might, if such a case should happen, be called in; and if it were thought more satisfactory, or the mother was distant from a large town, he might be previously appointed to be near at hand.

It is much to be wished that respectable midwives could be readily procured, who had studied their profession scientifically. Will any one be so absurd as to maintain that the female mind is not capacitated for such a study? Speaking generally, women have quite as much genius as men; and they can assist in various manufactures with equal ingenuity, though their domestic situations and vocations generally prevent in them so much mental exertion or participation in the commercial arts. By exclusively devoting their professional studies to a scientific and practical knowlege of midwifery, midwives would generally possess more skill in this profession than medical men. If midwives possessed scientific knowlege and experience in their profession, I have little doubt that they would be confided in and encouraged amongst the higher orders of society, and their exertions could not fail to be amply rewarded. It would be very desirable if private courses of lectures on the practice of midwifery were immediately given in the metropolis by respectable surgeons for the instruction of female students exclusively. An institution should also be established there, and others at Edinburgh and Dublin, for such lectures at the public expense. This object might with great propriety be effected by the aid and sanction of the legislature, and this would be the most speedy and decided course. If the legislature does not interfere, the public have the ability within themselves. On account of present exigencies, the sooner public institutions of this kind are formed by the one means or the other the better. I cannot conceive any objection to the immediate adoption of such a plan; it clashes with the interests of the medical profession, but surely the public welfare ought to be preferred before the exclusive and baneful advantage of any particular set of men. Many respectable and well-educated young females would find the profession of midwifery worthy their study and practice. An attentive perusal of some modern and able treatise on the practice of midwifery, and an attendance at lectures on this subject, will both be requisite, besides an attendance as a student at a few childbirths, to initiate the young midwife. Let her pursue her laudable course with firmness and constancy, reflecting at the same time that she will thus be advancing to extinguish great and lasting evils affecting her own sex, and may confidently look

forward to an ample pecuniary recompense. One-half, or even less, of the accoucheur's usual profits would abundantly repay her exertions. She will thus in a short time have it in her power, probably on numerous occasions, for many years of an active life, to advance the honor of her sex; to prevent indelicacies as gross as they are unnatural; to prevent an infringement on that rational self-respect which contributes to render women amiable in the estimation of the wise and good of the other sex; and to prevent the ill consequences to female health, or possibly fatal consequences, which in a greater or less degree are superinduced by the present practice of midwifery.

A late number of the "Gazette of Health" contains an article intitled, "Observations on Sir Anthony Carlisle's Letter to Mr. Secretary Peel on Midwifery:" a letter which he published in the Times, a few months previous to the date of that from which I have given an extract. The writers for this monthly periodical are of course medical men, and a more palpably absurd article than this could scarcely have issued from their pens. Assertions of facts without proof or even argument, and sentiments at variance with the common sense of the lowest and most ignorant mechanic, whose natural reason is entire. One specimen will suffice the reader. "Sir Anthony Carlisle thinks it extremely indelicate to employ a gentleman as a midwife. Now we appeal to any person who has witnessed the practice of man-midwives and midwives, if the conduct of the latter is not more indelicate than that of the former." Here the appeal is left; an appeal chiefly to interested nurses and prejudiced mothers: not a word offered in support of this proposition. Grave and potent knights of the lancet, who, I verily believe, have shortened more lives by the misuse or too excessive application of the effects of this instrument, and of the stupefaction and deadening properties of your assuaging opiates, than soldiers have destroyed in war, do proceed a little farther consistently with your first essay, and turn the contemptuous smile into a laugh. Say, "we appeal to any person who has witnessed the properties of each, whether the night is not lighter than the day." But the public are, surely, not to be duped by such an arrogant and ridiculous appeal as you have made; such an insult to common sense. Sir Anthony Carlisle, in his public letter just mentioned, observes, that in the case of the Princess Charlotte, if a female had attended her Royal Highness, the result would have been very different to what it was. But what says the "Gazette of Health" in reply; "the difficulty arose from the large head of the child, and the corpulency of the Princess." Now the latter part of this observation is not true, she was not corpulent; but if she had been very corpulent, this would most probably

have been a circumstance of little importance in this respect. As the other point turns on a question which, as it fortunately happens, may be here discussed in a manner not to be in the least offensive to individual or public decency, I will enter on the task, though I am not in the medical profession, without fear of ridicule or error. When we are attempted to be outwitted and deceived by the abuse of technical terms or ideas, we call in the aid of common sense, as often as it is available, to unravel the mystery. It is a common saying amongst the lower classes of women, in reference to pregnancy and childbirth, and a true one, that "nature suits the back and the burden to each other." The labor was retarded, and rendered extremely lingering through the unnatural and indelicate presence, and perhaps interference of the accoucheur; and when this has actually been the case, and the consequence has been fatal, we are told that the child's head was too large. Yes, the whole body was too large, or the mother's body too small, which you will, on the same nonsensical principle. By a parity of absurd reasoning all unborn children are proportionably too large for the mothers, because they are not miraculously diminished from their natural and proper size for a time, to compensate in ease to the mother, for the obstruction in the natural progress of labor superinduced by the accoucheur. The case was in principle like that of a valuable horse, who is appointed to travel a long distance, directly from one certain place to another, without rest; a journey which the noble animal could thus have accomplished without great fatigue. When he has proceeded a quarter of the way, he is frightened or driven back to begin again, and thus advances and returns several times till he is fatigued; at length when he has arrived half way, he is put back to the first quarter, when he begins to droop, and this course is cruelly repeated several times till he becomes exceedingly weak; at last, when with his latest efforts he has with extreme fatigue and pain reached the third quarter of his journey, his strength completely fails him, though his limbs are perfect, his whole frame through overstrained exertion is verging towards a secession of vital action, the poor sufferer cannot proceed further, he staggers for a moment, sinks down, and expires. Now if the same principle of foolish reasoning is applied here, it will be said that the horse did not reach the end of his journey, because at the beginning he had not strength to accomplish the task which in the first instance was assigned to him. Well may the very next article in this periodical be on the subject of a drug, which it is alleged has been recently discovered to have been "given with the happiest effects" in "cases of tedious or protracted labor." Cases of lithotomy, the operation of cutting for the stone, are mentioned; but how extremely few are the females in whom this or any like

offensive surgical operation ever becomes necessary. Even in the case of a female who has been so unfortunate as to have required and undergone this operation by the hands of a surgeon, her subsequent childbirth, if any, ought to be attended by a midwife. The female having been morally innocent of indelicacy under the operation, or even, if possible, had she been otherwise, surely she has not thus necessarily become insensible to modesty in future; and if in this life we cannot arrive at or secure perfection, we ought, and our feelings induce us when not counteracted by evil passions, to approximate to it as much as we are able.

The next objection to midwives assumed in this periodical is, that if they were scientifically instructed in midwifery, they have not nerve enough to act in difficult cases; and it is further pretended, that if they had nerve, they have not strength. Invention is strained to impute to midwives a variety of stupid and ignorant errors, most of which would be attributable to few of the women that have assisted alone at childbirths, without ever having been present at one before. For instance, it is alleged that a woman through sympathy would endeavor to hasten the labor, and that thus she would retard it. No, a woman accustomed to assist at labors is as collected over them, under the greatest agony of the mother, as any accoucheur can be. It is very easy to go on with unfounded general imputations of defects and misconduct, without a shadow of reason or probability to support them. As to the requisite nerve on such occasions, Sir Anthony Carlisle's letter before quoted, as well as some of my preceding observations abundantly show, that some accoucheurs are apt to have a too unqualified extent of nerve, and to speak as the occasion warrants, to deliberately exercise the most depraved and horrible cruelties, even to death itself!

Now I will not be satisfied, like my antagonists of the monthly periodical, with bare contradictions and assertions, I will come to the test. I will conclusively prove, by facts and arguments, that women have sufficient nerve and strength too for the most difficult cases; and first, nerve, as it is characteristically termed by the medical profession. To avoid prolixity, I will pass over many cases which are adduced by my adversaries requiring less nerve; I will enter at once on the most difficult case they have summoned to view. The question is asked, "in cases of distortion of the pelvis, is a woman equal to the extraction of the foetus by piecemeal, or equal to perform the Cæsarean operation?" Here is a case so exceedingly rare, that but very few females can apply it to any instance within their knowledge. It supposes an original and peculiar bodily deformity in the mother. Before I proceed farther with the immediate case, I will enter into a discussion of the nature of this nerve, referring to its possession by women. It

is animal courage or strength of mind, as distinguished from the firmness of mind inspired by reason and conscience. Whether women possess this constitutional courage generally, in an equal degree with men, it is not requisite for my purpose to decide, but experience shows us in various ways that they certainly do nearly, if not quite so. For instance, do not women as frequently commit, or attempt to commit, suicide as men, in cases where, as to both sexes, the reasonable capacity is entire, though governed by passions? I admit animal courage is not so frequently brought into action by them; the reason is, because the violent passions are not so readily provoked to an equal extent in them as in men, and when they are, their violence is generally sooner appeased in women. The question is, whether women have not sufficient animal courage for all the purposes of midwifery. It was experienced for some thousands of years that they had every natural requisite for these purposes, but now the fact is questioned. Of course my remarks are founded on the presumption, that the midwives to whom they are applicable are equally well acquainted with practice as accoucheurs. This animal courage or strength of mind is not alone adequate; it is unsteady in its application; it is alternately too weak or too rash. It is most readily aroused by anger; but in cases of personal danger in the party himself, or another for whom he has a fellow-feeling, where it is required to be deliberately and accurately exercised at some risk of not obviating the danger, it will often be found to be imperfect when alone. The firmness of mind which a cultured mind, which reason and conscience will inspire when united to a moderate qualification of animal courage, is known to face personal danger with as much dauntless intrepidity and calm perseverance, with as much presence of mind and promptitude fitting the occasion, points essentially requisite in difficult cases of midwifery, as the greatest animal courage alone ever did. In general such a union is superior in power, and especially in constancy, to great animal courage only. This fortitude is a quality of the mind which is possessed at least in as great a degree by women as men; and its union with animal courage is equally distinguished for its effects in the sex. Experience and reflection will bring this truth home to the mind of every man possessing a moderate share of discrimination and experience. I will term this union of animal courage and fortitude, personal courage. Women very seldom court danger, as men sometimes do, for the sake of heroic fame, because the female sex are not instinctively propelled so much to desire it, and because they know that the amiable qualities procure them the esteem of the other sex; but in cases of emergency or real necessity, personal courage is as conspicuous in

them as in men. Consider the Suttees in India, where, under the conscientious errors of Paganism, the widow willingly and deliberately prepares herself, and is burnt to death, on the funeral pile of her husband! History furnishes us with abundant instances of great personal courage in women. As instances, taking them separately, they are certainly not conclusive; but as they are frequent, they infer a general effect; and if they did not, they would at least tend to confirm the conclusions from our own experience. Let me remind the reader of Paulina, wife of Seneca, the heathen philosopher. He was doomed to die by the Roman Emperor Nero, that monster of every kind of cruelty and vice, and suffered by being bled to death; and she spontaneously solicited to die with her husband, and willingly suffered awhile the same lingering process with great composure; till after that she had become insensible, Nero, fearing his cruelties would render him hazardously odious, ordered her servants to bind up her wounds; and she survived a few years in great weakness of body, showing every respect to the memory of her husband.

If we search the early history of our own country, we shall read in Hollinshed's *Chronicles*, which furnish a more minute and characteristical detail of early events than modern books do, that in the perpetual warlike encounters between the ancient Britons and the Roman legions who invaded their territories, the British armies were attended by the women, who witnessed the battles, and encouraged the men; sometimes participating in the contest. Of course their presence was impolitic; but I mention the circumstance to show, that females in general possess considerable courage in great exigencies. As this work from its antiquity is too scarce to be accessible to most readers, I will cite a few miscellaneous extracts from it, coupling them together, as connected with the bold and enterprising spirit, heroic intrepidity, and persevering bravery of the celebrated Voadicia; and will refer the reader for more particulars and further instances to the book itself.

But the Britains were chiefelie mooved to rebellion by the just complaint of Voadicia, declaring how unseemelie she had been used and intreated at the hands of the Romans: and because she was most earnestlie bent to seeke revenge of their injuries, and hated the name of the Romans most of all other, they chose hir to be captaine (for they in rule and government made no difference then of sex, whether they committed the same to man or woman), and so by a generall conspiracie, the more part of the people, having also allured the Essex men unto rebellion, rose and assembled themselves together to make warre against the Romans. There were of them a hundred and twenty thousand got together in one armie under the leading of the said Voadicia (or Bunduica as some name hir). She, therefore, to encourage hir people against the enimies, mounted up into an high place raised up of turfes and sods, made for the nonce; out of the which

she made a long and verie pithie oration. Hir mightie tall personage, comelie shape, severe countenance, and sharpe voice, with hir long and yellow tresses of heare reaching downe to hir thighes, hir brave and gorgeous apparell also, caused the people to have hir in great reverence. She wore a chaine of gold great and verie massie, and was clad in a lose kirtle of sundrie colours, and also thereupon she had a thicke Irish mantell: hereto in hir hand, as hir custom was, she bore a speare, to shew hirselle the more dreadfull. Now Voadicia being prepared (as you heare) set foorth with such majestie, that she greatlie encouraged the Britains; unto whom for their better animating and emboldening, she uttered this gallant oration in manner and forme following. "I doo suppose, my lovers and friends, that there is no man here but dooth well understand how much libertie and freedome is to be preferred before thraldome and bondage. But if there have beene anie of you so deceived with the Romane persuasions, that ye did not for a time see a difference betweene them, and judged whether of both is most to be desired: now I hope that having tried what it is to be under both, ye will with me reforme your judgement, and by the harmes already taken, acknowledge your oversight, and forsake your former error. Againe, in that a number of you have rashlie preferred an externall sovereigntie before the customes and lawes of your owne countrie, you doo at this time, I doubt not, perfectlie understand, how much free povertie is to be preferred before great riches, whereunto servitude is annexed, and much wealth in respect of captivitie under forren magistrats, whereupon slaverie attendeth. For what thing, I beseech you, can there be so vile and grievous unto the nature of man, that hath not happened unto us sithens the time that the Romans have been acquainted with this island. Are we not all in manner bereaved of our riches and possessions? Doo not we (beside other things that we give, and the land that we till for their onelie profit) paie them all kinds of tributs, yea for owne carcasses? How much better is it to be once aloft and fortunate in deed, than under the forged and false title of libertie, continuallie to paie, for our redemption, a freedome? How much is it more commiendable to lose our lives in defense of our countrie, than to carie about not so much as our heads toll free, but dailie oppressed and laden with innumerable exactions? But to what end doo I remember and speake of these things, since they will not suffer by death to become free? For what and how much we paie for them that are dead there is not one here, but he dooth well understand. Among other nations such as are brought into servitude are alwaies by death discharged of their bondage; onelie to the Romans the dead do still live; and all to increase their commoditie and gain. If anie of us be without monie (as I know not well, how and which way we should come by anie), then are we left naked, and spoiled of that which remaineth in our houses, and we our selves, as men left desolate and dead. How shall we looke for better dealing at their hands hereafter, that in the beginning deale so uncourteouslie with us: since there is no man that taketh so much as a wild beast, but at the first he will cherish it, and with some gentleness win it to familiaritie? But we our selves, to saie the truth, are authors of our owne mischiefe, which suffered them at the first to set foot within our island; and did not by and by drive them backe, as we did Cæsar; or slue them with our swords, when they were yet farre off, and that the adventuring hither was dangerous, as we did sometime to Augustus and Caligula. Wherefore my well-beloved citizens, friendes, and kinsfolkes, (for I think we are all of kin, since we were borne and dwell in this ile, and have one name common to us all,) let us now, even now, I saie, because we have not done it heretofore, and whilst the remembrance of our ancient libertie remaineth, sticke together, and perform that thing which dooth pertain to valiant and hardie courages, to

the end we may inioie not onelie the name of libertie; but also freedome itself; and thereby leave our force and valiant acts for an example to our posteritie: for if we, which have beene liberallie and in honest manner brought up, should utterlie forget our pristinate felicitie, what may we hope for in those that shall succeed us, and are like to be brought up in miserie and thraldome. If you consider the number of your enimies, it is not greater than yours; if you regard their strength, they are no stronger than you: and all this dooth easilie appeere by the bassinets, habergeons, and greives wherewith you be armed, and also by the walls, ditches, and trenches that you have made for your own defense to keepe off their excursions; who had rather fight with us a farre off, than cope and deale with us at hand strokes, as our custome of the warres and martiall discipline dooth require. In their houses also and tents they make much account of their baked meates, wine, oile, and abroad of the shadow; that if anie of these doo faile them they either die foorthwith, or else in time they languish and consume: whereas to us, everie hearbe and root is meat, everie juice an oile, all water pleasant wine, and everie tree an house. Besides this, there is no place of the land unknowne to us, neither yet unfriendlie to succour us at need: whereas to the Romans, they are for the most part unknowne and altogither dangerous, if they should stand in need: we can with ease swim over everie river both naked and clad, which they with their great ships are scarce able to performe. Wherefore, with hope and good lucke, let us set upon them couragiously, and teach them to understand, that since they are no better than hares and foxes, they attempt a wrong match when they indeavour to subdue the grehounds and the wolves." With which words the queene let an hare go out of hir lap, as it were thereby to give prognostication of hir successe; which comming well to passe, all the companie showed, and cried out upon such as not long before had doone such violence to so noble a personage.

After giving a description of two victories which this heroine achieved; one over a Roman garrison, and the other over the ninth Roman legion, under Petus Cerealis its lieutenant; and stating the return of Paulinus Suetonius, the Roman lieutenant-governor, from Anglesey, with the main Roman army in great speed through these disasters, the account proceeds as follows:

In the mean time, there came over to the aid of Suetonius the legion surnamed the 14, and other bands of souldiers and men of warre, to the number of ten thousand in the whole; whereupon, chiefelie bicause vittels began to faile him, he prepared to give battel to his enimies; and chose out a plot of ground verie strong within straits, and backed with a wood, so that the enimies could not assault his campe but on the front: yet by reason of their great multitude, and hope of victorie conceived by their late prosperous successe, the Britains, under the conduct of Queene Voadicia, adventured to give battell; having their women there to be witnesses of the victorie, whome they placed in charrets at the uttermost side of their field. Voadicia, or Boudicia, (for so we find hir written by some copies, and Bonnica also by Dion,) having hir daughters afore hir, being mounted into a charret, as she passed by the souldiers of ech sundrie countrie, told them, "It was a thing accustomed among the Britains to go to the warres under the leading of women; but she was not now come foorth as one borne of such noble ancestors as she was descended from, to fight for hir kingdome and riches; but as one of the meaner sort, rather to defend hir lost libertie, and to revenge hir selfe of the enimie for their crueltie shewed in scourging hir

like a vagabond, and shamefull deflouring of hir daughters." For the licentious lust of the Romans was so farre spread and increased, that they spared neither the bodies of old nor yoong; but were readie most shamefullie to abuse them; having whipped hir naked, being an aged woman, and forced hir daughters to satisfie their filthie concupiscence. "But (saith she) the gods are at hand readie to take just revenge. If ye therefore would wey and consider with your selves your huge numbers of men of warre, and the causes why ye have mooved this warre, ye would surlie determine, either in this battell to die with honour, or else to vanquish the enimie by plaine force, for so (quoth she) I, being a woman, am fullie resolved; as for you men ye maie, if ye list, live and be brought into bondage."

The Roman army being exceedingly well-disciplined, long accustomed to war, and furnished with superior weapons, was, as usual, when strong in numbers, victorious; as the Roman soldiers were accustomed to be at that time over the then known world. Let us see what became of our heroine.

There were slaine of the Britains that day few lesse than eighty thousand, as Tacitus writeth. For the straits being stopped with the charrets, staid the flight of the Britains, so as they could not easilie escape: and the Romans were so set on revenge, that they spared neither man nor woman; so that manie were slaine in the battel, manie amongst the charrets, and a great number at the wood's side, which way they made their flight; and manie were taken prisoners. Those that escaped would have fought a new battel; but in the mean time Voadicia, or Bonuica, deceased of a naturall infirmitie, as Dion Cassius writeth; but other say that she poisoned hir selfe, and so died, because she would not come into the hands of hir blood-thirstie enimies.

Our country was subject to the Roman yoke for nearly four centuries; I hope it can never hereafter be truly said, that it was subject to the yoke of man-midwifery for three quarters of a century. The natural courage of both sexes is not diminished, from what it was in our ancestors, by our present civilisation. Occasions of self-defence are become less necessary, through the protection of a national soldiery and of the civil authorities. The depravity, always more or less abounding in a society, is partly extinguished, partly changed in its form; artifice and stratagem have succeeded, as in the lust of man-midwifery, to rapine and open violence. Yet the army of a civilised nation has as much animal courage, besides exclusively possessing the collected intrepidity which a cultivated reason affords, as the host of barbarians to which it may be opposed, with better means of effectual hostility.

The preceding observations on female courage, and the instances adduced, being applied to the difficult and exceedingly uncommon case of practice before particularised, I will now decide what my adversaries in the Gazette of Health have foolishly left doubtful in respect of this case. They propose the alternative of destroying the child or the mother; for if the mother were already

dead, the Cæsarean operation, if considered available to save the child's life, would be performed by a novice without hesitation. I will relieve the midwife from irresolution on this point, by informing her, if the weakest capacity could hesitate, that as one must die to save the other, she must and conscientiously ought to save the mother by destroying and extracting the unborn child. For the purpose of proving that a woman of tolerable capacity has resolution and nerve, provided she is skilled, to perform this operation successfully, I will, in addition to what has been sufficiently urged to this point, mention a general fact peculiarly suited to my reasoning, which is of itself, without any other help, quite conclusive. Such of my readers as reside in or near to populous manufacturing towns or districts, have been often credibly informed, through the medium of local newspapers or otherwise, of frequent particular instances of illegitimate infants being deliberately and wilfully drowned, or otherwise destroyed, by their own mothers—yes, by their own mothers; who have been instigated to the act partly by shame; but have been chiefly incited to take this step by the powerful impulses of actual want—to save the child from the starvation, filth, disease, and lingering death, which under their custody would perhaps have been unavoidable. The legal proof of the mother's act is generally wanting, but the infants are found dead, (having, as it is frequently ascertained from a surgeon at the inquest, been born alive,) under circumstances which lead to a pretty sure conclusion that the mothers, who are sometimes individually suspected and sometimes unknown, have been the destroyers. They are sometimes legally proved to have been so, and are ascertained to have concealed the childbirth, premeditating their purposes. Mothers have been often convicted, in cases of infants being found dead, of concealing the birth of the child; and in such cases there is a pretty sure inference that they were the destroyers. The fact of an infant found dead not being owned by any mother, though a coroner's inquest is always held in the immediate neighborhood where it is found, is almost conclusive against the mother, though she may be undiscovered. Now as a woman of principles so depraved, as to resolve on murdering her own infant, actually born alive and perfect in shape and vigor, for the mere purpose of adding to her temporary convenience, and saving the child from possible starvation, possesses animal courage to perpetrate the deed; it is quite certain, that a woman of tolerable mental capacity and of virtuous principles will, in a hundred-fold degree, possess personal courage to destroy and extract the unborn infant of another woman; when, in addition to her animal strength of mind, her reason inspires her with fortitude and perseverance, and she is animated by a consciousness that thus,

and thus only, can the mother's life be saved, and that she is performing a justifiable action, and that no person in his senses can disapprove of her conduct.

The mental capability of midwives is conclusively proved to be equal to every difficult case of practice from what has been previously observed, even without the comparison just drawn. Difficult cases rarely happen even before a surgeon, and I have before shown that they would still more seldom occur before a midwife: and when they do happen, women having on emergent occasions equal courage and fortitude with men, skill and experience will inspire confidence and persevering constancy in the practice of the one sex, as much as in that of the other. Let it be remembered, however, that all women, indiscriminately, are not mentally capacitated for midwives, in respect of either studying or practising the profession; in each sex are alike to be found individuals of genius, application, and strong mind, and others of inferior capacity. With the advantages of science and experience, women would be equally as capable of acting with efficiency and success, in the most difficult cases of midwifery practice, as men; thus obviating the various great objections to man-midwifery, without introducing others in their stead.

The other plausible objection to midwives, the assumption that they have not bodily strength for some cases of difficulty, will require few words to refute it. Thousands of women in this country possess great bodily strength. A midwife ought to have, at least, mediate strength as a woman, and this will suffice for every purpose. A sufficient number of suitable females might be readily obtained of adequate strength, quite enough of strength, as well as nerve, for midwifery practice, including every uncommon occasion of difficulty requiring more strength than in others. Besides, midwives might occasionally assist or substitute each other in difficult cases, as accoucheurs sometimes do.

There is another objection pretended against midwives in the Gazette of Health, which, from what I have shown and proved, can relate only to the adoption of the common midwives of the present day; but for the sake of argument, and to give this objection full play, I will, in pointing out its invalidity, suppose it to relate to future midwives scientifically instructed, as well as the others. It is said, "how often does it happen that the intimation to the patient of the necessity of the assistance of a man-midwife has a most injurious effect on her mind? In many cases of difficult labor this intimation has operated most injuriously on the brain, in consequence of the nervous and sanguiferous system being in a state of feverish excitement; the patient supposing that some formidable operation will be necessary to save her life." What a

stupendous display of words pointing to a terrible phantasm of deliberate and almost wholly pure invention. Really, gentlemen of "the obstetric art," as you often term midwifery, you are very ingenious in mysteriously dissembling. Yes, you help out the lack of scientific intelligence by mysterious expressions, about which you yourselves have no certain idea; instead of resting content with knowledge accessible to the human mind, and applying it usefully and unerringly. That some degree of mental uneasiness would be felt by a mother under the whole circumstances, is unquestionable; but that a mother would feel similar uneasiness during and subsequent to the same actual operation of the accoucheur, had he been called in from the first, is equally unquestionable; and the mental uneasiness previous to his being called in would be nearly absorbed by a solicitude for the assistance of the person who could administer the requisite relief in a case of emergency. The midwife, in the meantime, accustomed to witness labors, and knowing the nature and extent of the difficulty, would be enabled to soothe the mind of the mother, and to prevent any unnecessary anxiety; and if she were only a common midwife, an accoucheur, if my suggestions are attended to, will soon be present. A common midwife being generally competent to cases of small irregularity, which nevertheless are very unfrequent, the surgeon would most probably be only required for difficult cases, which are exceedingly uncommon; and moreover, out of these difficult cases there are only two or three that indispensably require prompt assistance: so that such a case as one of the latter description is about as unlikely to happen, as that the house should fall on the mother and midwife during the childbirth. But supposing for the sake of argument, that after all these observations there was a shadow of objection left in favor of the accoucheur's assisting from the first, for the specious reasons I have just cited, are there not many great and insuperable objections to his attendance, as often respect the health or even the life of the mother, besides many other probable, and some certain evils before described; and must not he to obviate this shadow of objection attend from the first in all cases, carrying with him these evil consequences in his train: and is it not wiser to incur the small risk of a less evil, than to run a considerable risk of many great ones, and be certain of encountering others?

Another subject discussed in a previous article of the same number of the *Gazette of Health*, is the question of the propriety of the popular feeling lately displayed as to the disinterment of human bodies for surgical dissection. This, of course, is a subject not within the scope of this tract; however, as it is in some degree connected with the subject of indelicacy and personal

abasement, and I have already treated fully of those points, I will make a few brief observations on it. The indelicacy is obviously greater in the case of a deceased female ; but the circumstance of the body exposed, being in all these cases of course dead, certainly very much abates the indelicacy : yet, on the other hand, the actual bodily exposure cannot be greater, as to the extent of visibility and contact, in any case. We have naturally a respect for the remains of a deceased person, which is proportioned to the love, the friendship, the respect, or common good-will we had for the party when living. Therefore, very many persons will affectionately take up the hand, or kiss the lips of a near and dear deceased relative : we attend a funeral, and erect a tomb ; and a surviving near relative or intimate friend will perhaps visit the grave to indulge his sensibility. I am not indiscriminately alluding to funeral pomp, which may or may not be dictated by feeling, but to inward and heartfelt respect. Possessing this particular or common respect for the remains, we are therefore sensible to any indelicacy which we know to have been committed on them ; and this sensibility is proportioned in degree to the respect. There is an implied natural repugnance in the deceased person when living to an indelicacy committed on his body after death, and an implied natural desire on the part of himself and others that his remains should rest in the grave to be destroyed by time, without being subjected to indelicate exposure. If on a sea-voyage the dead body is necessarily consigned to the watery deep, there is still no indelicate exposure. Perhaps it will be said, that the surgeons procure the dead body clandestinely—the secret is never disclosed, and surviving relations and others are therefore under no unpleasant sensations, and that there is no wrong, because no injury is felt. This secret is a risk ; but suppose otherwise, then we have the absurd principle, that all positive injuries that are not sensibly felt or discovered are justifiable : so that the man who deceived and entertained a guest at table with a joint of horse-flesh, or food more disgusting and exceedingly filthy, has done no wrong ; for the guest never knew the deception, and the meat was wholesome. To be sure, the deception here was wanton ; but still in the former case, it was practised more probably for the sake of gain than necessity. There is a respect due from one to another, which charity requires us to feel and evince for a person ; so as not to take advantage of his unconsciousness, present and future, to do that without his authority which if he were acquainted with the deed, and on that condition only he would feel to be an unjustifiable harm towards him ; and if we fail in observing this respect, we are still accountable for the act to an Omniscient Being. In the present case, we ought to respect the

reasonable and laudable implied desire of the deceased person when living, and of his surviving relations and others. Besides these considerations, the notorious and unnecessary frequency of dissections creates an unpleasant suspicion and anxiety in a person, both on his own account and for his relatives and friends. There are in this country too many surgeons, and too many lecturers on anatomy, even in proportion to the number of students, of which there are also too many; so that these lectures by their superabundance are oftener a matter of gain than of necessity. If some plan were adopted to prevent too great a number of lectures, and thus to secure the attendance of as many students at each lecture as can properly receive instruction, it would be desirable, because it would be a saving of dissections. The fact is, that with all their dissections, nineteen out of twenty medical men throughout the country are not sufficiently competent to act in surgical operations of much difficulty, even to set and manage a fractured limb: nor is it likely, even if surgeons were not too numerous, because such cases comparatively so seldom happen, that they can have no adequate experience. If a plan were adopted for the great bulk of surgeons to attend to physic and less difficult surgical cases, and one surgeon or more residing in each considerable market-town, according to the population, were to exclusively practise in difficult surgical operations, the skill and experience of the latter class would be of peculiarly great benefit to the public. The plan would have the additional advantage of reducing the frequency of surgical dissections. The proper subjects for dissection appear to be all criminals who have suffered capital punishment, and those deceased prostitutes of the description of street-walkers, who have regularly followed their vile pursuits for a long time, say three years successively or upwards, previous to their deceases. If the most were made of dissections, these bodies, in addition to those of medical men or other persons who may choose voluntarily to bequeath their remains for the purpose, would be quite sufficient for the surgical and healing arts, with the aid of excellent treatises, with plates, on human anatomy. I will not digress further on this subject; it relates to an indelicacy of small importance in comparison with the indelicacy only of man-midwifery.

Perhaps it will be urged by some persons, as an excuse in favor of the future adoption of man-midwifery in particular instances, that the agitation of the present question, and the exposure of the accoucheur's misconduct having become so public as it now is, medical men will in future act with propriety. This is a selfish and temporising plea. Their corrupt desires cannot be extinguished, and the public cannot and never will be sufficiently on their guard. Medical men have opportunities or pretexts for

cluding vigilance. Can the public interest, even should it be excited by my efforts, and those of a thousand other writers on this subject, create a lasting sensation in the community? Can we permanently change the course of nature in the human passions? Would not time obliterate the effects of our exertions, unless a change of system is effected, while all the abuses of man-midwifery would recur, as all mankind are naturally more or less, individually, prone to selfish gratifications? Ought we to be so devoid of charity, as to have no concern for posterity? Are we to slumber over the partially beneficial and temporary effects of precept on the evils of a bad system, without offering our aid and the influence of our example in support of an attempt, easily practicable, to change the system for one that will not only completely and permanently extinguish these evils, but is in its nature without a single peculiar defect? Besides, is the gross indelicacy of the ordinary assistance, or even the presence of the accoucheur in common cases, and the still greater indelicacy of his assistance in others, of no consequence?

There being no original and purely natural impediments to the proposed reformation, I will now inquire into the contrived obstacles opposed to it. In order to contend successfully in any adverse enterprise, we should become acquainted with the position and strength not only of our open enemy, but of our secret adversaries; and we should carefully ascertain on what force we can rely for conquest. As far as medical men are concerned, most of them are obviously averse to a change in the present system, and the same remark applies to many of their near relatives and particular friends. But as there are some persons in the profession of more liberal minds, and an amply sufficient number, no doubt, who would be willing, if respectfully solicited and with offers of a fair remuneration, to instruct an adequate number of suitable women in the practice of midwifery; and as the other opponents mentioned, besides the medical men, are comparatively few in number, and their ill-directed efforts easily to be frustrated, by the suspicion which attaches to their relationship a peculiar intimacy with those of the profession who are averse to a change; it is natural to inquire, what is the real cause of the present delay? Nearly two years have elapsed since I first addressed the public, in my small tract, on the subject of the proposed change, and in a few months afterwards, copies were gratuitously circulated very extensively in the metropolis and the country; yet hitherto no general plan of public utility has been attempted. With the exception of two courses of lectures on the practice of midwifery lately given in Manchester by Mr. Radford, a respectable surgeon practising there, to female students and practitioners exclusively, I know of

no efficient steps having been yet taken to instruct women in the practice of midwifery. The ladies do not appear to have generally used their persuasive influence in a matter which so greatly concerns them. Except in a few partial instances, they have not, as far as I have been able to inform myself, adopted my suggestion of employing midwives of the present day in general cases, as a temporary expedient, calling in a surgeon, or appointing him to be near at hand, if it should be requisite: a measure so obviously proper, that in the present agitation of this subject it would naturally occur to their minds. No matter, whether my humble endeavors, or the efforts of those who have since ably written in support of the good cause, have been equal to the great importance of it; the mere title-page of my pamphlet, the bare suggestion of the subject for consideration, would, I am certain, be sufficient with most persons of even moderate capacity and discernment to decide the question, if unbiassed by prejudice or influence, in favor of a change of the present system. The attention of the public has now been excited, and I am convinced that they are generally anxious to have the system altered. The public being now on their guard against the influence and machinations of medical men and their open abettors, these persons cannot be the sole nor principal cause of the present delay. No; the delay rests chiefly with a certain, and that not a small portion of the fair sex. This portion may be divided into two classes. One of these classes, of which I will dispose first, as being of the two by much the least numerous and influential, is the monthly nurses, usually attending ladies preparatory to and during their accouchements. These female nurses are generally well acquainted with the accoucheurs in their respective neighborhoods, being frequently obliged to them for recommendation. Indeed the recommendation is often reciprocal between both parties in their respective callings. The nurse having many private opportunities, is therefore very likely from prejudice and partiality to speak in favor of the accoucheur's practice, and to throw out hints of danger in substituting a midwife: all which observations, coming from an experienced and often unsuspected, though deceitful nurse, it is not to be wondered at that many young married ladies should readily approve of and credit her statement. Ladies in general, however, from a knowledge of the nurse's relative situation, have discernment to detect this fallacy, and are therefore enabled to expose it to those of their sex, whose youth and inexperience may render them liable to its effects.

The other, and the more formidable class of female opponents, are mothers, of all ages; not considering them with reference to their parental situation, but as females having experienced child-

birth, assisted, as has been the general custom for the last half century, by accoucheurs. I enter on this part of the subject with much regret, that occasion should have been given for doing so; conscious as I am that a large and important part of the fair sex are justly liable to severe censure for their present perverseness; nevertheless I enter on it unhesitatingly, because I have the general and permanent welfare and happiness of the sex at heart. I hasten to say, that I speak not in censure of all mothers, nor even of most mothers; for I am convinced from conversations I have had with some of them, and from various other sources of information, that many are advocates, or are privately in favor of the proposed change in the system of midwifery. This assertion, that mothers are the principal cause of the present delay, is not founded on hasty presumption, but on long and mature observation and reflection, and on information. It is supported as well by argument, as by particular instances and general facts within my knowledge. How are we to account for the seeming apathy of the fair sex in general to the proposed change, notwithstanding the readiness of midwives of the present day, as a temporary and conditional expedient, and notwithstanding the concurrence of nearly all men, except accoucheurs, in the propriety of it? We must look for the cause of this coolness in some considerable portion of the fair sex themselves. Now no man in his senses can suppose, that the sex in general are naturally prone to wilfully support the vices, and experience the great temporary evils of man-midwifery. Monthly nurses, as well as accoucheurs, I have shown to possess little influence since the present subject has been brought into public notice. Mothers, by reason of their experience, authority, and consequence, and their pervading all ranks of society, possess very extensive influence. This influence has been hitherto very successfully exercised by many of them amongst themselves and young married females, either actively or by a specious neutrality, in opposition to the introduction of the practice of midwifery by midwives. They have thus exercised their influence for the following reason. They have absurdly viewed the present agitation of the subject and the proposed change as a source of shame to themselves, as having participated in the errors of the present system; and suppose that if the reformation were effected, they should hereafter suffer in a comparison with females who, in their earliest occasion and subsequently, had wholly availed themselves of it: they have therefore endeavored to silence the subject, and prevent the effecting of the change. With respect to facts in support of the position I have taken, I could adduce several striking instances, but it would be invidious to particularise examples, because by alluding to special circumstances, though no names

were given, the instances might be appropriated; and if they were appropriated correctly, it would nevertheless be partially severe to do so, and create an irritation, which, after this sufficient allusion, might serve only to give a partial check to the desirable purposes of this tract. As a general fact, I can confidently assert that my intercourse with society having enabled me to observe the conduct and manners of the many mothers with whom I am personally acquainted, or by whom I am personally known, and who have known me to be the author of the former editions of this tract, I have without pretending to much penetration perceived from their manners enough to convince me that some of them are, or have been, hostile to the proposed reformation. As a collateral proof that this is the case, I have observed with much pleasure, that nearly all those ladies with whom I am more or less acquainted, who are either unmarried or are married without having had children, and who are arrived at an experienced age so as to form their own opinions unbiassed by the arts of others, have signified to me indirectly, yet in the most unequivocal manner, their approbation of the cause I am supporting; and I do not recollect one of them to have signified contrarily.

It is certainly a despicable circumstance, that any mother should harbor such narrow principles, that she cannot view with complacency this great projected improvement in the situation of the present and future generations of females; because, as not having been introduced on the earliest occasion that she could have availed herself of it, she is foolish enough to suppose it would, if effected, be to her a source of shame. Will she be so uncharitable as to have no concern for the health and safety, the decency and morals, of her own sex, and for the connubial fidelity, the peace and happiness mutually of husband and wife? Can she continue to be so selfish as to place the transitory, trifling, and unreasonably unpleasant feelings of herself and a few other equally selfish mothers of the present age, in competition with the naturally and reasonably anxious desires, the good taste, the purity of morals, and the happiness in a considerable degree of the present, and all future generations of society of both sexes? If a corrupt pride instigate her to partly sacrifice her regard for her own delicacy, let charity, on the other hand, teach her to surmount this pride, and also to respect delicacy in others; let it prompt her to reflect on the evils of man-midwifery which I have described, and then to lend her best aid and the influence of her example in support of the practice of midwives. Let her remember, that it is not only prudent to avoid error, but magnanimous to acknowledge it, where the acknowledgement is no injury to her, and an advantage to others. I have as good an opinion of the fair sex generally as a man rea-

sonably can have ; and I think they are fully intitled to maintain that rank and consideration in society, which in this nation they in general possess ; indeed, in some respects, I think they are debarred from privileges which they ought to enjoy. Still, I entertain no romantic ideas respecting them ; and it is incumbent on me to distinguish between right and wrong in conduct, and to act as conscience dictates. Women having, naturally, more modesty, and especially a higher sense of personal delicacy than men ; I am certain, for this reason, that were it not for the evil influence or specious indifference, the bad example and tutelage of such mothers as I have been censuring, women in general, and particularly young modest females, would cordially unite in manifesting to the world their approbation of the proposed reformation.

But whence arises this sensibility to shame in a mother ? A little reflection would dispel it. A wrongful act, as it relates to the person committing or authorising it, and without reference to circumstances of aggravation or extenuation, admits of two degrees of guilt, or it may be wholly blameless and excusable ; accordingly as it proceeds from design, carelessness, or unavoidable error. Now design, which is by far the principal degree of guilt, is, in the case of the wife, out of the question. I have before remarked that females, though they are aware in a general point of view of the natural forwardness peculiar to the male sex, yet being naturally strangers in feeling to the impetuosity of desire which prompts it, are therefore not so capable of detecting the pretences of the accoucheur as men are ; and besides, they therefore cannot so readily perceive the extent of his impure feelings. The generally presumed and undisputed honor and uprightness of medical men in general have contributed to produce the same effects. A generally prevalent and unimpeached custom has had the same tendency. And beyond all these considerations, a sense of delicacy has sealed the lips of the wife from general complaint ; and she has been urged, as the artful accoucheur was well aware, to secrete the indelicacy even from her husband, improperly though almost unblamably, by her anxiety to support his love towards her. These palliations combine in nearly every instance of a female hitherto attended by an accoucheur ; and though they impute a degree of carelessness, and do not form a perfect excuse, they approach nearly to it.

The accoucheurs stand in a very different light to the fair sex. Their conduct was designed. They must be acquainted with the unlawful gratification afforded to their lustful desires, and have anticipated this gratification. They must be conscious of their own impure motives in instances of extraordinary unnecessary

interference. Excuse for their misconduct is out of the question; because it was morally incumbent on them to have abandoned a vocation which was at best indelicate, and which led them into actual contact with an evil passion, in such a case, nearly always more or less incontrollable. In the ordinary abuses of man-midwifery, medical men of the present day, however, are intitled to some palliation for their misconduct. Those of the present age did not originate the abusive system, but succeeded to the practice of their predecessors. They were brought up to the medical profession; and as surgeons were induced to enter it partly for the sake of the emoluments of man-midwifery; and the pecuniary means of many of them are so contracted through rivalry, that these have been stimulated to support the present system to avoid poverty. It is no palliation, however, that their practice of midwifery was not a subject of public complaint, because accoucheurs were conscious that the community in general were not aware of the various evils of it. The wife has always experienced some of these evils, and the husband sometimes has directly or consequentially experienced more or less of them: and though in some instances he may through unconsciousness have never actually felt, and through death never will feel a direct injury, and never received a consequential one, from the accoucheur's practice, yet the latter is still guilty of moral wrong to the husband, for the reason mentioned, when formerly alluding to wrongs unconsciously suffered in cases of surgical dissection. A change of system in the practice of midwifery will not be a permanent injury to the interests of medical men. If it is effected, there will in future be fewer students in the medical profession; so that the present members of the profession will share more of their proper business. There will be the same reduction in their numbers constantly operating by death or other incapacity, without a proportionate, yet with an adequate supply.

Men of all ages and ranks, whose opinions I have asked, or by other means been able to ascertain, except interested persons, have almost uniformly approved of the general purposes of this tract. Some of my readers will perhaps ask, how is a husband, who is averse to the present system of midwifery, to act, if he is united to a female who is disposed to have the assistance of an accoucheur, or the firmness of whose resolution to the contrary he has reason to doubt? I will suppose, for the sake of example, that these circumstances should occur in the case of a young gentleman, who has been recently married to a young female of great personal beauty and accomplishments, to whom he is ardently attached. After perusing these pages, he will of course beware of the importunities and insinuating address of the medical men

in his neighborhood ; all of whom he will probably perceive to endeavor in an especial manner to court the acquaintance and favor of himself and his partner, as early after the marriage as opportunity may serve. Besides reasoning with his wife on the propriety of a midwife, he will caution her against the undue influence of monthly nurses, and most of all, of the mothers whose conduct I have reprehended. He will likewise act up to the suggestions furnished by the following excellent description and remarks thereon, taken from the tract from which I have before quoted.

“Not many months after marriage the lady is attacked by the usual qualms from pregnancy ; and the accoucheur, according to the most modern practice, is then commonly called in. Some of my readers, I expect, will immediately apply the following description. On being introduced, he assumes an ingenuous air and apparent candor, to impress his patient with a conviction of his honesty and zeal. After having once secured an inroad, the lady is ‘put under his care,’ as it is termed, and his visits of course are frequently repeated. The husband, having no suspicion of his wife’s danger, is often absent, either on business or pleasure ; and the patient (if a woman can be styled a patient merely because she is pregnant) finds relief from solitude in the society and conversation of the doctor. He commonly begins at each visit by kind inquiries respecting her health, made in a polite but earnest manner : he discovers a solicitude to amuse and please her, knowing that woman’s gentler feelings are always deeply affected by kindness and attention. Accompanied by an apology on the necessity of the case, he asks her questions of a nature that the generality of men are not at all aware of. Nothing, of course, can be concealed from him ; and though the patient, from her youth and inexperience, cannot judge how far his questions may be relevant, and therefore justifiable, she supposes that a gentleman, and one of an honorable and liberal profession, as it is termed, would not exceed his duty by asking any unnecessary and improper questions, which must of course be of a private nature. These conversations being frequently repeated, a confidential feeling is excited in the mind of the woman towards the accoucheur : that kind of discourse, she would once have shrunk from, by degrees becomes familiar to her ; and she shortly habituates herself to talk to him as she would to her nurse ; ‘which is what women like,’ at least so a gentleman of the same profession once declared to me to be the case. A pleasing reflection for husbands, and a handsome compliment to ladies. Such conversations, however, ought never to occur between a medical man and a youthful female ; and if husbands possessed the least delicacy of sentiment themselves, or had the smallest regard for that of

their wives, such conversations, if ever necessary, would always be carried on through the medium of a nurse or of themselves; unless female modesty is unworthy of preservation, and then let unlimited indulgence be openly and avowedly granted to all women. It is notorious that there are many accoucheurs who, under the pretence of asking the wife necessary questions of a private nature, do not hesitate to require the husband to withdraw, who commonly is wise enough to comply. This perhaps will remind the reader of the priest in the Decameron of Boccaccio, who sentenced the husband to perform a penance in a dark room at the bottom of the house, that he might be enabled to pass the time agreeably alone with the wife in another apartment. Unlike the husband, the accoucheur never complains, is never dissatisfied nor indifferent; he is always cheerful, polite, and invariably kind, showing the most devoted and subtle attentions, as he finds opportunities. And it is this system which excites generally, in the minds of women of all ranks, that feeling of partiality towards their medical attendants, which is found so frequently to prevail."

By attending to the remarks and suggestions I have mentioned, as far as they may be requisite, the husband's efforts and vigilance will most probably prove successful, and his young wife will most cordially join in his sentiments. However, should she, on the contrary, be disposed through evil influence to sacrifice delicacy, honor, and virtue, and perhaps her health or even life; and also to sacrifice the feelings of her husband, and in a considerable degree the mutual peace and happiness of both, to her perverseness and wayward prejudice; let him then act with the firmness and decision becoming his situation, and the exigencies of the occasion. A proper midwife being engaged, he ought to insist, at all hazards, on her assistance being exclusively adopted, if the case is one of usual occurrence; and as the midwives of the present day are not competent to cases of difficulty, it will be proper to have some one in readiness to procure an accoucheur, lest it should perchance become requisite, which is extremely unlikely; or if the husband's residence is not in a large town, or if his wife desire it, the accoucheur should be previously appointed to be near at hand.

I will not occupy the reader's time with reasons in support of the conduct I am now recommending; for it is so palpably just and proper, that it would be trifling with his patience to do so. Should the husband, however, be weak enough to compromise his rights and his duty, he will in addition to his wounded feelings, and himself and his wife encountering the certain, and perhaps some of the possible, bad consequences of an abusive system, ultimately incur the secret contempt of the accoucheur whom he has indulged; who, if he has been informed of the husband's

unsuccessful efforts, will privately laugh, or perhaps, in a way not to be misunderstood, openly and exultingly smile at his puerility; pluming himself on the manner in which he and the wife have managed the good-natured and docile husband. It is not unlikely that such a husband, instead of magnanimously retrieving his past indecision by openly expressing his indignation at man-midwifery, will endeavor to conceal his uneasiness from the world, and will inwardly increase it by aiming at a foolish consistency, in pursuing the quiet and tractable course he has already taken; and for this purpose will manifest a studied complaisance towards his cunning guest the accoucheur, whose triumph will then be complete. The husband may try to find solace and repose in an unqualified assumption of the Christian doctrines of "meekness, long-suffering, forbearing one another, and forgiving one another;" but reason, if he possess a moderate capacity, and exercise it, will tell him, that a wise, a prudent, and a virtuous man, without entertaining revengeful feelings in his heart, will adopt all fair means and precaution to prevent the occurrence of temporal injury; and to prevent its recurrence, will, as far as he is able, discipline by lawful means the evil aggressor in the manner and to the extent the case warrants, not in a spirit of retribution, but (resigning that to Providence) as the necessities of himself and society require. Such conduct is expected of him by his Creator, not only for his own individual protection, but as a member of society, for the protection of his fellow-creatures, to reform if possible the evil-doer, and, as an example to others, to prevent the repetition of offence.

In the present habits of society in this nation, men generally occupy all the lucrative employments, including those that might with equal propriety and effect be supplied by women. Thousands of young females of respectable parents who have been decently brought up and educated, and who are therefore unfitted for the drudgery of common service, are necessitated by the pecuniary misfortunes of their parents to earn a livelihood by needlework. All other female occupations equally suitable for them, or of a superior kind, require comparatively few individuals to supply them; and it is notorious that such is the rivalry amongst females in this business, that employment is generally exceedingly precarious, and the profit very small. Many of such young females having in vain sought for a slender pittance, their parents being either dead or through misfortunes unable to provide for them, therefore without a home and pressed by poverty, in a moment of despair, resort to prostitution and its concomitants, misery, disease, and death! The police reports of the metropolis show that many young prostituted females from the polish of their manners, and

from the history they relate, must have had a respectable origin; and that they have become a prey to this vice through their inability to procure an employment suited to their capabilities, and through the impulses of sheer want. Hence the great extent of prostitution, and of the consequent contamination of the youth of both sexes. What an important collateral advantage would it therefore be to society, as it respects the youth of both sexes, if the practice of midwifery were encouraged in young females, of good education and character. Another class of females, whom Sir Anthony Carlisle in his Letter from which I have quoted very properly recommends for midwives, are the wives, widows, or female kindred of medical practitioners; by whose introduction to midwifery, says he, "every surgeon or apothecary may secure his female patients against the inroads of his competitors, and establish a respectable maintenance for such female in the event of his premature death; while his consequent freedom from unnecessary confinement among gossips will allow him more time to follow his proper vocations."

I will mention another important collateral advantage which would result from the abolition of man-midwifery. Of all worldly advantages, health of mind and body are of the first necessity and importance. For this reason a superfluity of practitioners, and their consequent inexperience, are more injurious to society, by their errors or inefficiency, in the medical than in any other profession. Let the practice of midwifery be exclusively adopted by women, and medical men would be gradually reduced from the present unnatural superabundance of them to a number more accordant with the wants of society, and their experience would be proportionably increased. They would equally well supply the accidental coincidence sometimes happening, of numerous pressing occasions for their immediate assistance in the same neighborhood at the same time, by reason of their reduction in number being compensated by an abridgment of their duties; an abridgment considerable, as well in point of number of attendances as of the great length of time occupied in them.

Many of the sentiments I have expressed are from the nature of the subject open to the shafts of silly ridicule, and have to combat with the prejudice of inveterate habit, and the sophistry, mistatements, and sneers of petty interest. It is very likely that many medical men, without directly adverting to the present subject, will in the course of their frequent professional interviews with the other sex throw out hints of danger, and allude to some solitary cases of death in childbirth. But let the female reflect that such cases are exceedingly uncommon; that they have happened during the attendance of the accoucheurs themselves, and

have not unfrequently been occasioned by their interference. Let her consider what has been observed in the beginning of this tract as to the general regularity of labors. Let her remember too, that persons of her own sex are able to acquire equal skill with men to avert danger in these cases; and that until there are women of adequate skill, a common midwife of the present time may be adopted without the risks and other evils superinduced by the accoucheur's presence: that the midwife will probably be able, should it become necessary, to obviate, as many can, small irregularities in the progress of labor, which are very uncommon; and that an accoucheur may be conditionally substituted in the manner before recommended. Perhaps the medical men will in future cunningly observe silence on the present question; for having an unsolid foundation whereon to stand, they know that the more they were to plunge, the more they would sink. They may now quietly, or even gracefully, walk off the surface, as I hope they all will, and as I have reason to believe that many will, instead of perversely and uncharitably maintaining their ground till it gives way, and they become immersed with it in the gulf of popular disesteem.

As an individual, my humble yet earnest exertions are necessarily of a limited nature. As a husband and a parent, I have written with confidence; and I am so thoroughly convinced of the propriety of the proposed reformation, that I confidently trust my sentiments to the consideration of the judicious and candid reader. The subject is unquestionably of great and lasting importance, and I wish that I could have expressed these sentiments with correspondent energy. It is for *every individual* in society approving of my general purposes to contribute his own aid and influence in promoting them. With all due respect to which the members of the medical profession may be fairly intitled, while acting in their proper sphere, I sincerely hope that a free and enlightened British public will not compromise the national honor; will not allow the united and persevering influence and insinuating address of medical men, and the machinations of them and their supporters, to stifle and triumph over the cause as well of decency and good taste, as of innocence, humanity, connubial happiness, and virtue.



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Founded 1876

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